

Outlining an Effective Speech

I'm sure you're familiar with outlines and you may have even outlined a speech in the past. My guess is that you probably didn't put much thought into the process. This is a critical mistake! It is not possible to overstate the importance of a properly *executed* speech outline. Note the emphasis on the word *executed*. A speech outline is a process, not an outcome. The value of an outline lies in the work required to put it together, not in any points you receive for turning it in. To put it bluntly, your speech will succeed or fail depending on the mental effort you put into the outline.

It is not possible to overstate the importance of a properly *executed* speech outline.

Don't write a speech outline because one is required for class, write one the right way because the process of doing so will clarify your thoughts and make your speech clearer and thus more likely to be understood and remembered. There are no shortcuts to this. If you follow the instructions described here, I'll bet your speech goes smoother and is less stressful than you might imagine. If you gloss over the outline or treat it as an afterthought, however, you probably won't do well. Remember, the real work of public speaking is in the preparation; delivering the speech is the easy part.

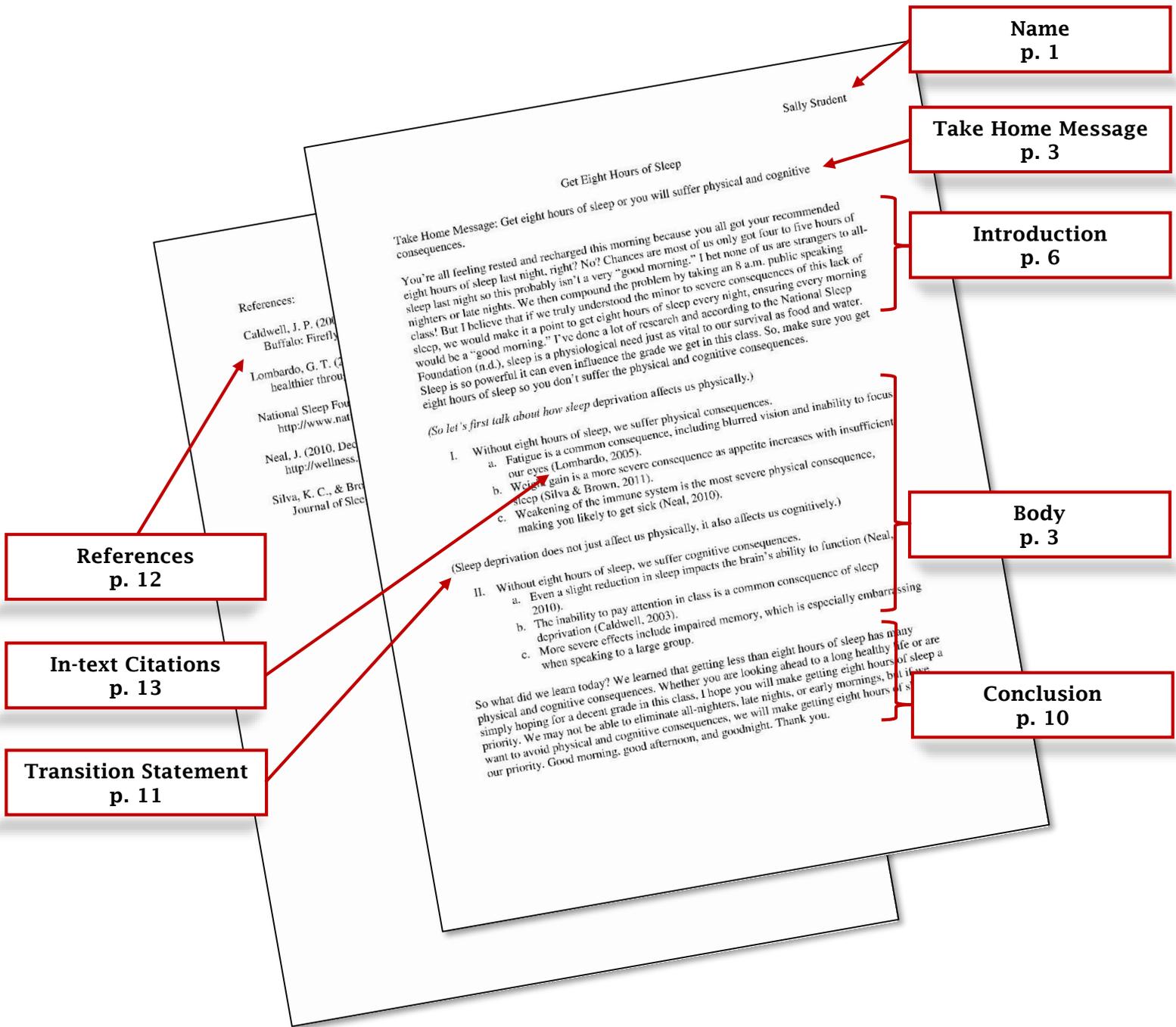
The key elements of an effective outline are:

- Clear, concise Take Home Message (THM)
- Introduction, written word-for-word, touching all five elements of an effective introduction
- Main points and sub-points summarized in one complete sentence each
- Transition statements
- Conclusion, written word-for-word, that includes the four elements of a conclusion
- Reference section listing your cited research

Name

Include your name on your outline. This seems obvious, but you would be surprised how many people forget. Also note that the outline is typed (see Figure 1). All professional communication is typed. For the purposes of this class, use a single-spaced, 12-point font.

Figure 1: Sample Outline



See Appendix for copy of the Sample Outline

Take Home Message

The Take Home Message (THM) is your speech condensed to *one* sentence. In this sentence, you must tell us what you want us to think, feel or do and why. Yes, in ONE sentence only. This is where KISS and TBU¹ are most obvious. If you can't condense your speech to one sentence, you are trying to cover too much information. The average person can't remember a telephone number longer than necessary to dial, so there is no way an audience can retain a lengthy, wordy THM. Think of this as the Twitter version of your speech. On the flip side, your THM needs to be specific enough that we know what is expected of us. If your THM is vague, we'll never clearly understand your message and the only thing we'll remember is that you were confusing. If we can't comprehend and retain your message, why waste our time?

Start by articulating the specific purpose of the speech. What exactly what you want us to think, feel or do?² If I'm a beer distributor, I may want you to "buy Miller Lite."

The second component of the THM answers the question, "Why?" The answers are your main points. Why would you, my audience, potentially want to buy Miller Lite? My audience analysis shows that students want a beer that is palatable, enables them to drink a lot of it, and is cheap. So my THM may be, "Buy Miller Lite because it tastes great, is less filling, and it's cheap." This is short and simple yet tells you exactly what I want and gives you a general idea why.

The THM should reflect everything your speech is about, including the structure. Think of the THM as the skeleton of your speech. Tell us what you want us to think, feel or do (analogous to the introduction) and why (your main points). Be succinct and don't embellish with unnecessary verbiage. If you can't say your THM three times, really fast, it is too complicated for a speech. A THM that has more than one sentence is *way* too complicated for a speech.

Please note that the THM is not the first line of the introduction. They are different entities serving different purposes. The THM is barest essence of your speech and the introduction is the actual beginning of the speech. I have you list the THM first because it sets boundaries for judging what is TBU. If some part of your speech does not directly support your THM, leave it out. No exceptions.

The Body

It should be obvious that you write the body of the speech before you write the introduction. But then again, putting your name on your assignments also seems obvious. Despite what the book says, your speech should have only TWO or THREE main points, each supported by TWO or THREE sub-points. If the numerations "IV." or "d." appear in your outline, alarm bells should be going off. Your job as a speaker is to separate the *absolutely critical* information from the *merely important* (what is true, but useless). It doesn't matter if you have five really interesting points to make and you're confident you can cover all five in the time allotted, you must limit yourself to two or three.

Bottom line, it doesn't matter what you can talk about. The only thing that matters is what the audience can process and understand. When reading written material, the human brain is able to absorb an amazing

¹ KISS = Keep it short & simple
TBU = True but useless

² Your specific purpose in a purely informative speech is simply the statement of your topic. In the more typical persuasive context, you will be trying to get us to think, feel or do something.

amount of information. The same is not true when listening to arguments presented orally; our brains, literally, cannot process the same information. Written works are nice because you can read at your own pace and you can reread parts you don't understand. Speeches must be processed in real time and therefore must be incredibly simple. This says nothing about your intelligence or the intelligence of your audience; it is simply a biological limitation. If your topic has more than two or three *absolutely critical* main points, you need a new topic because the one you have is too complex to work as a speech.

Your outline should have only main points and sub-points.

I. Main Point

a. Sub-point

b. Sub-point

1. ~~Sub-sub-point~~

If you start adding sub-sub-points, you have too much information. Avoid the temptation to think that the additional specificity will increase our understanding or make you more persuasive. The opposite is true. The best speeches are the simplest ones. Points and sub-points are like tequila: a little goes a long way and more is not necessarily better. In fact, in a speech more is never better.

If you want to impress your audience with your intelligence, limit your speech to just two main points with two sub-points each. Simplifying your speech allows you to spend more time vividly describing each point and sub-point. It is how easily we can visualize your points that makes you believable, not the number of arguments. Try to convey your message in just two main points, expanding to three only if absolutely necessary.

When deciding on the number of points and sub-points, be also sure to consider your natural speaking style. If you get nervous when you speak you probably tend to speak really fast, so the temptation is to add more information to the speech so you don't run short. But remember, the amount of information an audience can absorb has nothing to do with whether you talk fast or slow; it's a biological constant. Rather than trying to find additional points to make, look for additional details you can add to your examples to make them even more vivid and/or develop another example. Keep the number of points and sub-points to a minimum while maximizing the richness of the details you use to illustrate each.

If your natural speaking rate is slower, you should definitely limit yourself to only two main points with two sub-points each. Don't set yourself up to fail by pushing yourself out of your comfort zone.

Main and Sub-points in One Sentence Each

Articulate each point and sub-point in one simple declarative sentence. What is the message you want left in our minds when you sit down? Focus on the message itself, not what you intend to say to convey that message. Remember the discussion of the basic model of communication and how I said you may need to say $2q - 17 \text{ over } \pi$ in order for the audience to hear $A+B=C$? For each of your points and sub-points, I want you to tell me the $A+B=C$ you are trying to convey. What, in one sentence each, do you want the audience to hear? Your ability to distill your points and sub-points into individual sentences will determine your success during the speech. If you are clear about $A+B=C$, the $2q - 17 \text{ over } \pi$ will come to you naturally.

I think it is a fair assumption that you know a lot about your topic. Knowledge is good, but we've already established that an effective speech requires that you get rid of all that is TRUE BUT USELESS so you can KEEP IT SHORT AND SIMPLE. Forcing yourself to articulate $A+B=C$ in one sentence is the best way to accomplish this. This is harder than it sounds. In fact, the more you know about your topic the harder it is. Because it's hard, people tell to skip this step. Your vast sum of knowledge is like a matted ball of yarn;

everything you need to know is there, but finding a specific strand takes work. You're going to have to pull on this and loosen that until the knots all come apart. Now ask yourself, do you want to do the untangling with bunch of people looking at you or do you want to do it from the comfort and privacy of your computer chair? For example, the three points of my Miller Lite sales pitch are:

- I. Tastes great
- II. Less filling
- III. Cheap

Yeah, I'm finished! Right? Hardly. I need at least two sub-points to justify inclusion of a main point. If I don't have at least two sub-points then I know the point is TBU. So, what do I mean when I say Miller Lite tastes great? How would I describe the taste? Honestly, I don't know because I never really thought about it much; I just know that I like it. Well, unless I want to look like a fool, I better come up with something. Should I go online and watch last night's Daily Show and just wing it, hoping what I mean will magically come to me while I'm speaking? or should I force myself to stop and think deeply about my topic? Professionals wait and watch the Daily Show after they finish their outline!

After much deliberation and "research" (i.e., I'm making this up), I've come up with the following:

- I. Miller Lite is brewed to taste great.
 - a. They boil quality barley in spring water to maximize the malty flavors.
 - b. A special blend of hops is used to prevent any bitter aftertaste.
- II. Miller Lite will not make you feel full.
 - a. Allows you to drink more.
 - b. Drinking more will enable you to bust your move on the dance floor.
- III. Miller Lite is cheap to buy.
 - a. Microbrews are \$9-10 per six-pack.
 - b. Miller Lite is \$6 per case.

I've boiled my speech down to nine sentences. Will the audience remember all nine? No, and it is unrealistic to expect them to. But if I make the points vivid through the use of stories, I bet I can get them to remember the THM: "Buy Miller Lite because it tastes great, is less filling, and it's cheap." Who knows, maybe the next time they are in the liquor store all they'll remember is "Buy Miller Lite." Since getting them to buy the product is my specific purpose, I'm okay with this. But what if I want them to retain every point? As simple as it appears on paper, this speech is at the outer extreme of our ability to process oral information. If I want you to retain details, I must reduce the number of main points down to two. As counterintuitive as it is, fewer points allows us to retain more specifics while more points limits retention to just the gist of the speech.

Why All the Work?

Is all this work really necessary? Yes. Is there a shortcut? No. If you clearly know what you want to communicate, then writing it down in single declarative sentences will be easy. For most of us, however, this level of clarity only comes with sufficient time and concentration. This is why you can't write an effective speech the night before it is due. Last-minute speeches don't fail because there was no time to practice; they fail because there was no time to achieve clarity.

One of the biggest fears people have about public speaking is that they will forget what they meant to say. Distilling what you mean into one sentence helps clarify your message in your head, making it much easier to recall and discuss clearly when you have a bunch of people looking at you. When what you intend to communicate is clear in your head you don't have to think, you can just let your mouth move.

Checklist 1: The Body of the Speech

Main points – Minimum of 2, maximum of 3

- Does the numeral *IV* appear, indicating that I have more than three main points?
- Is each point stated in just one sentence?
- Could an unfamiliar reader understand the essence of my point from my one sentence?
- Are any of my sentences questions? (The essence you are looking for is probably the answer to the question. Use the declarative answer instead of the question.)
- Does each point directly support my Take Home Message?

Sub-points – Minimum of 2, maximum of 3

- Does the designation *d.* appear, indicating that I have more than three sub-main points?
- Is each sub-point stated in just one sentence?
- Could an unfamiliar reader understand the essence of my sub-point from my sentence?
- Do the sub-points directly support the main point? Are any TBU?

Amount of information – Too much or too little

- Do I have enough examples to adequately illustrate each point?
- Do I have too much information for the audience to retain?³

The Introduction

Only after you have developed the body of your speech can you begin working on your introduction. Think of the introduction as a trailer to a movie; it contains all the best parts in order to convince the audience to sit through the rest of it. Without an effective introduction, your audience will mentally walk out before the movie (your speech) even starts.

The five elements of an effective introduction are:

- Attention getter
- Clearly state your subject, including what you want us to think, feel or do
- Establish your credibility
- Give us a reason to listen
- Preview your main points

The first line of the introduction grabs our attention and the final line tells us what points you will cover. The other three elements can be addressed in any sequence you desire.

³ Here is a simple test to tell if you have too much information: Close your eyes and recite each of your points and sub-points exactly as written on your outline. If you cannot do this, you have too much information and you cannot expect your audience to be able to follow along. You took the time to research your topic and write your points in your own words. In other words, you invested a lot of mental effort in your subject. If, after all that effort, you have more information than you can remember, then you must accept that it is biologically impossible for an audience, who may or may not be paying attention and who has to process your words in real time, to absorb what you are saying. Keep in mind, research suggests that people do not just stop listening when they become overloaded with too much information, they mentally dump (forget) what they have heard to that point.

Grab Our Attention

The first words out of your mouth must immediately grab our attention. Remember playing with balloons as a kid? You'd blow one up and hit it into the air, over and over, trying to keep it from hitting the floor? Maybe you would add rules to make it more interesting, such as running around the table before you could hit it again. Our attention to your speech is that balloon. You want to hit it as high as possible to buy yourself some time to accomplish your goals before you have to reach out and hit it again. A good attention getter is unexpected and will launch the balloon high in the air. A poor attention getter won't even get the balloon off the floor.

Remember "Bruce Springsteen once said..." from the first day of class? How many of you expected that? Most people expect professors to begin with something to the effect, "Ok, let's get started." I purposefully used the quote to be different. Likewise, don't start a speech with "Hi, my name is Rich and I'm going to talk about X." We form impressions almost instantaneously and these impressions dictate, subconsciously, how we behave by establishing what is called a schema. Schemas are like goggles that limit our way of seeing a situation. Because we have heard "Hi, my name is Rich and I'm going to talk about X" as the precursor to so many boring speeches, our immediate reaction is to assume yours will be boring as well. The schema then becomes, "Keep your eyes open so everyone thinks you're listening while I drive us off to Lala Land." It is amazing how quickly this happens. Even if the rest of your introduction is entertaining, starting with "Hi, my name is..." will send us off so fast we'll never even hear the rest. So plan how you intend to rocket the balloon high into the air and let the first words out of your mouth do the work for you.

State Your Subject

State the subject and intent of your speech in your introduction. This isn't the "and I'm going to be talking about X" segment discussed above. Be more creative, but also be clear what you want us to think, feel or do. A speech is not a mystery novel with a big surprise at the end. If you expect us to follow you through a speech, you need to tell us where we are going. Imagine if someone started giving you driving directions with no context. You would be lost before you got past "Take your first right." Only after we're told we're going to the Pepsi Center can we begin to form a mental image that fits the directions.

Be clear where we are going, but avoid saying, "Today I'm going to persuade you to..." Human nature prefers the status quo. When someone tells us they are going to change our minds, we instinctively dig in our heels because changing our mind requires work. If you want us to believe in UFOs, let us know that you believe in UFOs and that you're going to explain why. If you want us to donate money, tell us up front your organization needs money. Some will argue against early disclosure because they feel it allows the audience time to formulate counter-arguments before you can lay out your full argument. The fact is, audiences can rationalize any decision they make and do so in real time (it's called confabulation). If you are up front about your direction, you increase the likelihood of us following the same path you are on and as long as we are with you, you have a chance of changing our minds. Once we've dug in our heels, however, there isn't much you can accomplish in a short speech.

Establish Your Credibility

Answer the question, "Why should we listen to you?" You can't assume we'll find you credible simply because you're speaking. Listening requires a lot of work; daydreaming is much easier. We aren't willing to put forth the mental effort for just anyone. Tell us what makes you an expert, and thus worth listening to. You can be overt (e.g., "I've been studying this for 10 years...") or covert (e.g., "When I was 10-years-old I went to baseball camp..."). Obviously, this last one only works if the subject of your speech is

baseball camp. Even if you are familiar to your audience, it is always good to establish your credibility on the subject of the day's speech.

Give Us a Reason to Listen

No offense, but we really aren't that interested in your topic. At least not until you point out why we should be. Our senses are continually assaulted by information competing for our limited attention. We only have energy to listen to things that directly affect us and your speech is just one of many. If we don't know upfront why we should care about your topic, the chances are we won't hear a word you say. You *MUST* tell us what we will gain from listening even if you think it should be obvious. For example, if I'm trying to sell you Miller Lite, it would be a mistake for me to assume you will connect the dots and recognize that a good tasting, less filling, cheap beer is in your best interest. The connection may be self-evident to me, but since you, my audience, aren't paying close attention you need to have the obvious pointed out.

Give your speech a sense of urgency by giving it a timeframe that makes it of immediate interest and value. As a beer salesman, I might start my speech by painting a mental picture of you hosting a lame party. Telling you that I'm going to teach you how to avoid this embarrassment by having plenty of Miller Lite on hand, I have given you a reason to listen. But I can increase your interest by simply reminding you that the weekend is only a few days away. Nobody likes missing out on something of value, so framing your message within a tight time window gives us an extra incentive to pay attention. Assuming your attention getter was sufficiently engaging, you have about 30 seconds to get us to accept that listening to you will be worth the mental effort. If we don't see what is in it for us, we'll head off to Lala Land and never look back.

Preview Your Main Points

The last line of your introduction is a statement listing the main points you intend to cover. The old adage is "Tell them what you are going to tell them, tell them, then tell them what you told them." This is absolutely critical. If you want to score well on a speech in my class, you will make sure you clearly preview your main points. It is by far my biggest pet peeve. But don't do it for the grade, do it because it works. It creates a schema that enables the audience to follow your speech with minimal effort. Sticking with the beer metaphor, imagine you have a pitcher you want to share with the audience. If you just start pouring all of it into one mug it's eventually going to overflow, make a big mess, and tick off a bunch of college students who hate to see beer wasted. You have to tell the audience, "Get three mugs." Knowing we will be hearing three reasons makes a tremendous difference in how we approach your speech (i.e., our schema now has three slots).

It is insufficient, however, to simply tell us you will be discussing three things. We also need to know what those three things will be. Don't go into detail about each, just name them (e.g., "Get three mugs; a pink one, blue one, and green one). This refines our schema and we'll use this information as reference points during your speech. Essentially, what you are doing is giving us markers and a map to find our way back from Lala Land. The average person has an attention span of about eight seconds. Eight seconds! So no matter how great your speech is, it's a given that we will drift off multiple times. As a speaker, your job is to make it easy for us to pick up the trail when you draw us back in.

Assume I end my introduction by telling you to, "Buy Miller Lite because it tastes great, is less filling, and it's cheap." During my discussion of the "tastes great" main point, your attention may stray as you recall a really bad beer you tried last weekend. An effective transition statement (discussed below) will bring you back to my speech and my description of how Miller Lite is less filling (my second main point). If I previewed my points, your brain will register, "Oh yea, I remember him saying something about that,"

and pick up the narrative thread. If I hadn't marked the trail, the fact that I am talking about something different from taste will cause confusion and you will simply fly right by to the other side of Lala Land, completely ignoring me.

This is the most unnatural part of public speaking. I argue that public speaking is simply a conversation between you and 13 or more people in which you happen to be doing most of the talking, but this is the one deviation. After all, you don't do this in normal conversation. I doubt if your roommate asked how your day was that you would say, "I had a really good day because I got a great parking spot, I got an A on my English paper, and a really cute guy came up to me in the library. First let me tell you about my parking spot..." You don't have to preview your points with your roommate because one, he is probably truly interested and two, it is hard for him to escape to Lala Land with you standing right there looking into his eyes. You don't have these advantages in a speech, thus you *MUST* make a conscious effort to provide the audience with this road map, regardless of how awkward it feels to say.

Write the Introduction Word-for-Word

Despite what the book says, the introduction is the most important part of your speech because it can make or break the speech. Without all five critical elements, we are going check out to Lala Land and will never hear the body of your speech. Because it is so important, it is the one part of your speech that should be memorized. Thus, you should write the introduction word-for-word, exactly how you plan to say it. Because written language is different from spoken language, this isn't as easy as it sounds.

Using a scratch piece of paper, jot down your responses to Checklist 2. Then imagine standing in front of your audience, talking about each element. What words come naturally out of your mouth? Type them into your computer. Remember, the trick of effective delivery is to be yourself so don't edit at this point. Write out everything. If you plan to ask rhetorical questions, write them out. If you plan to tell a story, write it out. Once you have everything down, make sure you have covered the five elements, and then look for ways to shorten the length without losing the meaning. Notice that the introduction in the sample outline (see Figure 1) is a fairly short paragraph. The odds of keeping the audience's attention go down with each extraneous word. Keep it simple and get rid of everything that is true but useless. But also keep it real. Don't edit your language to fit what your English professor expects from you. Use language and grammar that come to you naturally. Unlike English professors, audiences respond to everyday language, not correct usage.

Checklist 2: Five Elements of an Effective Introduction

- Grab their attention – Make the first words out of my mouth meaningful**
 - What is the last thing the audience expects to hear?
 - What could break the lethargy of the moment?
 - How can I prove this isn't going to be just another boring speech?
- Disclose my topic – No mystery novels**
 - What *specifically* do I want them to think, feel or do?
 - How can I introduce my topic without using the phrase "I'm going to..."?
- Establish my credibility – Toot my own horn**
 - What makes me worth listening to?
 - Why would I listen to me?
 - How am I just like them?

Checklist 2: Five Elements of an Effective Introduction, cont.

- Give them a reason to listen – State the obvious**
 - What is in it for the audience?
 - How will their lives be better in seven minutes?
- Preview my main points – Be explicit**
 - What is my Take Home Message?
 - Do they have sufficient direction to find their place if they get momentarily distracted?

Conclusion

The conclusion is much like the introduction, written out word-for-word. Unlike the introduction, it is not memorized. Okay, maybe sort of memorized. The point is to think about exactly what you want to say so that you are certain to include the four required elements of a conclusion while leaving yourself enough wiggle room to adapt. The four essentials of a conclusion are to signal the end, repeat your main points, offer closure, and say thank you. Signaling the end is simply drawing attention to the fact that you are beginning the conclusion. It is a cliché to say “In conclusion,” but it is the one cliché you can use to your advantage. What do you think happens to the audience when they hear “In conclusion”? When we realize you are about to finish, our ears perk up, even if it’s only because we are happy that you are finally going to shut up.

Now that you have our attention again, put it to work by repeating your main points. I said to leave yourself enough wiggle room because you may need to adapt the conclusion to the points you actually covered. For example, I may have planned to talk about how Miller Lite tastes great, is less filling, and is cheap. But because I was paying attention to the time cards and saw that I wasn’t going to have time to cover all my topics, I skipped the second point and went straight to “it’s cheap.” My summary then becomes, “So, you should buy Miller Lite because it tastes great and it’s cheap.” The human mind is a funny thing. You have to tell us you will be discussing three things (give us a schema for X, Y & Z) if you want us to be able to follow along, but we won’t notice when you skip Y and jump to Z. Just act like you meant to cover only those two. If you don’t draw attention to the fact that you only discussed two of the three, we’ll never know. Unfortunately, you don’t have this freedom if you are using PowerPoint and have a slide about “less filling.” In that case, make the discussion short and move quickly on to “it’s cheap” so you finish within the time constraints.

By repeating your main points, you have wrapped your speech like a nice little present. Think of closure as the bow on top; it’s a tasteful element that adds a touch of style and sophistication. The type of closure required will depend on the purpose of the speech and what was said previously. If you started the speech with a story, you could close by referring to or perhaps finishing the story. If your purpose was to persuade the audience, you could offer a challenge or ask a provocative rhetorical question. “You should buy Miller Lite because it tastes great, is less filling, and it’s cheap. So what beer are you going to buy the next time you are in the liquor store?” If you are trying to motivate us to take immediate action, demand action!

The last thing you should say is “Thank you.” I know several books say not to, but these books are wrong. These books expect you to finish with a memorable flurry. Yeah right. When you are leading a sales meeting at Best Buy you don’t need an MLK finish of “Free at last. Free at last. Thank God almighty, we

are free at last!” Not only is it unrealistic, you’d look weird. In the real world, people expect you to finish with a thank you. Unlike the attention getter, in this case you want to give the audience exactly what they expect. I’ve seen many speeches end without thanks and it’s not pretty. The speaker seems to finish and the audience is ready to applaud, but instead of saying thanks, the speaker starts to gather his notes. The audience has their hands poised to clap, waiting for the signal (i.e., “Thank you”). Without the signal, the audience starts to feel uncomfortable and this discomfort quickly turns them against the speaker. The audience wants to applaud, even if the speech sucked, but the speaker has broken the rules by failing to say thank you. When he finally leaves the podium, people will clap halfheartedly, but the damage has been done. Because the speaker made the audience feel anxious, whatever credibility and influence he developed during the speech is gone. He may have convinced everyone in the audience that he was right, but the audience will have turned on him because he is “obviously an incredibly insensitive person.” Always, always, always end with a genuine “Thank you.”

Write out the conclusion word-for-word, as you did with the introduction, using Checklist 3. As a general rule, the conclusion should be about half the length of the introduction. We tend to remember what was said last, so you want to give us something vivid to hold onto. A reference to your attention getter or repeating how our lives are better now that we listened to your speech will increase our retention.

Checklist 3: The Four Elements of an Effective Conclusion

- Signal the end – The transition into the conclusion**
 - Is it clear you have finished the body and are starting the conclusion?
 - Do you have something cleverer than “In conclusion”?
- Repeat your main points – Tell us what you told us**
 - Is the sequence of points consistent from introduction, through the body, to the conclusion?
 - Could your THM be copied and pasted here?
 - Do you have enough flexibility in case you have to alter your speech on the fly?
- Offer closure – Bring what you started to a focused end**
 - Did your introduction begin with a story that needs finished?
 - Do you want to challenge the audience?
 - Do you need to answer the question “Where do we go from here?”
 - If your goal is action, demand it; don’t assume we’ll figure it out
- Say Thank You – The last words out of your mouth**
 - A question and answer session does not count as part of your speech. Say thank you so the timer can stop, and ask for questions after the applause subsides.
- Bonus question – Do you have too much information?**
 - The average speaker’s outline should be no longer than one page. If more than a few lines of the conclusion spill over onto the second page, you have too much information and you need to simplify your message.

Transition Statements

Transition statements are simply a means of getting the audience from one point to another. Why include them in the outline? The same reason you write out your points: because it is easier to think about them before you have people staring at you. If you are like most people, you want to get any public

Reference Section

The course mandates that you research your topic and cite a minimum of four credible sources in the outline. Your sources should be based on substantial literature. Dictionaries, encyclopedias, Wikipedia, Ask.com, about.com, and blogs may be valid sources of information but lack academic rigor and thus will not count as one of your four sources. The Neal (2010) source in the sample outline, for example, is included in the reference section because it was used in the outline, but doesn't count as one of her four sources because it is from a blog.

A minimum of two sources must be from a newspaper, magazine, book or academic journal that is available in hardcopy form. Note that I say these two sources must be *available* in printed, hardcopy form, not that you have to have laid hands on the hardcopy. An article that appeared in the New York Times that you found on NYTimes.com meets this criterion. Material written for online publication only, regardless of the organization's credibility, do not count as hardcopy sources. Many people assume that the Huffington Post is an actual newspaper, but it is simply an aggregator of online articles and thus don't count as hardcopy sources.

You are required to cite the references on the outline using the *American Psychological Association Style Manual, 6th Edition*. The [Purdue Owl](#) website has everything you need to know about APA format.

Essentially, an APA reference provides four types of information about the source:

1. The authors are listed by last name, followed by their initials.
2. The publication year encased in parentheses. If there is no date given, use "n.d." to indicate no date.
3. The title of the source. APA is funny in that it uses sentence-case for titles, meaning only the first word, the first word following a colon, and proper nouns are capitalized.
4. Where the source can be found. If a book, this is the city, state abbreviation, and publisher. If you are citing an article from a periodical, include the name of the periodical, volume, issue, and page numbers. In another quirk of APA, the periodical title is written in title case. The physical item is denoted in italics. If a book, the title of the book is italicized. If a periodical, the name of the periodical is italicized.

Refer to the Owl website for examples of every conceivable type of citation. With so much information available online, it is important to learn how to properly cite documents found online. Because online materials can potentially change URLs, APA recommends providing a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) when available. If no DOI has been assigned and you are accessing the periodical online, use the URL of the website from which you are retrieving the periodical. Providing the DOI, however, adds an air of professionalism to your reference section.

You must show within the text of the outline where you use each reference (see Figure 1). Within parentheses, give the author's last name(s) and the year of publication. If you are quoting the source, you must also include the page number. Remembering your own words is hard enough, so it is better to just paraphrase unless the quote is short and especially pithy. Be sure that every reference has a corresponding citation and vise-versa.

Avoid common mistakes:

- Include four sources (worth 15 to 21 points on each outline)
- Include at least two sources from a newspaper, magazine, book or academic journal
- While you can orally cite personal conversations, they don't count for the outline
- Use authors' last names and just first and middle initials

- Do not include the authors' degrees or titles
- If no author can be found, use the first couple words of the title in place of the author
- When citing website with no author, date, or page number follow this [tutorial](#)
- List sources in alphabetical order
- Show where in the text you use each source by author's name and year "(Kessel, 2015)."
- Cite sources in-text everywhere appropriate, but list only once in the reference section

Appendix: Sample Outline

Sally Student

Get Eight Hours of Sleep

Take Home Message: Get eight hours of sleep or you will suffer physical and cognitive consequences.

You're all feeling rested and recharged this morning because you all got your recommended eight hours of sleep last night, right? No? Chances are most of us only got four to five hours of sleep last night so this probably isn't a very "good morning." I bet none of us are strangers to all-nighters or late nights. We then compound the problem by taking an 8 a.m. public speaking class! But I believe that if we truly understood the minor to severe consequences of this lack of sleep, we would make it a point to get eight hours of sleep every night, ensuring every morning would be a "good morning." I've done a lot of research and according to the National Sleep Foundation (n.d.), sleep is a physiological need just as vital to our survival as food and water. Sleep is so powerful it can even influence the grade we get in this class. So, make sure you get eight hours of sleep so you don't suffer the physical and cognitive consequences.

(So let's first talk about how sleep deprivation affects us physically.)

- I. Without eight hours of sleep, we suffer physical consequences.
 - a. Fatigue is a common consequence, including blurred vision and inability to focus our eyes (Lombardo, 2005).
 - b. Weight gain is a more severe consequence as appetite increases with insufficient sleep (Silva & Brown, 2011).
 - c. Weakening of the immune system is the most severe physical consequence, making you likely to get sick (Neal, 2010).

(Sleep deprivation does not just affect us physically, it also affects us cognitively.)

- II. Without eight hours of sleep, we suffer cognitive consequences.
 - a. Even a slight reduction in sleep impacts the brain's ability to function (Neal, 2010).
 - b. The inability to pay attention in class is a common consequence of sleep deprivation (Caldwell, 2003).
 - c. More severe effects include impaired memory, which is especially embarrassing when speaking to a large group.

So what did we learn today? We learned that getting less than eight hours of sleep has many physical and cognitive consequences. Whether you are looking ahead to a long healthy life or are simply hoping for a decent grade in this class, I hope you will make getting eight hours of sleep a priority. We may not be able to eliminate all-nighters, late nights, or early mornings, but if we want to avoid physical and cognitive consequences, we will make getting eight hours of sleep our priority. Good morning, good afternoon, and goodnight. Thank you.

References:

Caldwell, J. P. (2003). *Sleep: The complete guide to sleep disorders and a better night's sleep*. Buffalo: Firefly Books.

Lombardo, G. T. (2005). *Sleep to save your life: The complete guide to living longer and healthier through restorative sleep*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers.

National Sleep Foundation (n.d.). *How much sleep do we really need?* Retrieved from <http://www.nationalsleepfoundation.org/articles/howmuchsleep>

Neal, J. (2010, December, 3). Insomnia is linked to health risks. Retrieved from <http://wellness.blogspot.com/2012/12/03/insomnia-is-linked-to-health-risks/>

Silva, K. C., & Brown, T. (2011). Sleep deprivation and the dreaded freshman 15. *American Journal of Sleep Disorders*, 15(2), 312-318. doi:10.1108/03090560710821161