

The Basic Format

Regardless of the type of speech, the basic format is as follows:

1. **Warm-up:** The beginning of the speech is a warm-up during which you, the speaker, get accustomed to being in front of the audience by acknowledging, for example, the dignitaries present, the time of day, and the occasion. If your speech is the keynote address at a conference on the environment, you might open with the following: “Good morning, fellow researchers and environmentalists. I am pleased to be here in Vancouver to talk to you today about ...”
2. **Pre-introduction:** Use a joke, an anecdote, or a quotation to capture the audience’s attention. If the occasion is too serious for humour, then substitute an anecdote that has emotion or warmth—some kind of a hook. The purpose of this part of the speech is to get the audience’s sympathy—that is, to get them to relax and to like you, the speaker. Once the audience members are relaxed, they will be more receptive to the rest of the speech.
3. **Introduction:** Briefly outline the key points and/or sequence of items. Remember that three or four key points are all an audience will be able to remember.
4. **Body of the argument:** Make your key points, and offer examples and evidence to support them. Again, limit yourself to three or four points. Use rhetorical devices, which rely on sound and rhythm, to create memorable moments during the speech. Although the audience won’t be able to remember every word of your speech, you want them to be able to recall some of the lines.
5. **Summary:** Just as the Pre-introduction precedes the Introduction, the Summary precedes the Conclusion. Briefly recap the main points.
6. **Conclusion:** Find one statement or quotation that will likely remain with the audience. Refer back to key terms from your Introduction or Pre-introduction.