Organizing the Body of Your Speech

Organizational patterns are designed to strategically order the main points of a presentation to suit the audience, purpose, and topic of a speech. Informative presentations follow organizational patterns that help audiences retain information, and persuasive presentations follow organizational patterns that clarify and support persuasive arguments.

1. Main Points:
   A. Each main point should contain a separate argument.
   B. Arguments in main points should be supported by evidence.
   C. The amount of time dedicated to each main point should be balanced.
   D. Transition statements should be included to help the audience keep track of the presentation.
   E. Introductions should include preview statements that list main points.

2. Informative Organizational Patterns:
   A. Chronological Order– The main points follow a time pattern, either in the sequence of events, or in explaining a process from beginning to end.
      I. Example:
         a) The Seneca Falls Convention was held in 1848.
         b) The Nineteenth Amendment was ratified in 1920.
      II. Example:
         a) The first step of writing a speech is researching and gathering information.
         b) The second step is writing a preparation outline.
         c) The third step is writing a speaking outline.
   B. Spatial Order– The order of the main points shows a directional, geographic, or structural pattern.
      I. Example:
         a) The outermost layer of the earth is called the crust.
         b) The layer directly below the crust is called the mantle.
         c) The next layer is called the outer core.
         d) The innermost layer of the earth is called the inner core.
   C. Causal Order– The order of the main points shows a cause-effect relationship.
      I. Example:
         a) For decades, humans have been polluting the air with greenhouse gases.
         b) As a result, climate change is posing serious problems for the biosphere.
   D. Topical Order– The main points divide the topic into logical and consistent subtopics.
      I. Example:
         a) The First Amendment protects free speech.
         b) The First Amendment protects religious exercise.
         c) The First Amendment protects the freedom to assemble.
3. Persuasive Speech Organizational Patterns

A. Problem-Solution Order—The main points identify a problem and a solution.
   I. Example:
      a) The earth is being depleted of its resources, which is a problem for current and future generations.
      b) Humans can help preserve what resources are left through reducing, reusing, and recycling materials.

B. Problem-Cause-Solution—The main points identify a problem, the causes of that problem, and a solution to that problem.
   I. Example:
      a) The world’s oceans are becoming increasingly polluted by trash.
      b) This issue stems from the large amount of disposable materials we use every day.
      c) We should drink out of reusable bottles instead of disposable bottles.

C. Comparative Advantages—Each main point draws a direct comparison between two subjects, and argues why one is preferable to the other.
   I. Example:
      a) Pollution is bad for the planet. To reduce waste, we should drink from reusable bottles instead of disposable bottles.
      b) Pollution is bad for the planet. To reduce air pollution, we should ride bikes or walk instead of drive short distances.

D. Monroe’s Motivated Sequence—The order of the main points encourages the audience to take action.
   I. This is a unique organizational pattern in that the pattern applies to the full speech, not just the body of the speech.
      a) Attention—Gain the attention of your audience in a compelling way.
      b) Need—Convey the need for change by identifying a problem.
      c) Satisfaction—Explain your solution to the problem.
      d) Visualization—Use imagery to encourage your audience to visualize the ways in which your solution will solve the problem.
      e) Action—Call your audience to action and explain how they can help combat the problem.
   II. Example:
      a) Imagine waking up every day in a landfill.
      b) The world is becoming more polluted by trash every single day.
      c) By drinking out of reusable bottles instead of plastic water bottles, we can reduce the amount of trash littering our earth.
      d) Imagine how much cleaner the planet would be if everyone drank out of reusable bottles.
      e) Make the switch from disposable bottles to reusable bottles today, and do your part to help reduce waste.