

## Make the Most of Your Speech Conclusion

**Brief:** The role of a speech conclusion is to signal to the audience that the speech is ending and to help them remember the most important points from the speech.

**Learning Objective:** Define the role of a conclusion in a speech.

**Key Terms:**

- **Summarizing:** Succinctly communicating a complex or lengthy idea.

### Role of the Conclusion

The role of a conclusion in a speech is to signal to the audience that the speech is wrapping up and to help them remember the most important points from the speech.

Part of a successful conclusion is easing your audience into the end of your speech. If you end too abruptly, your listeners may leave with a feeling of incomplete knowledge or hurriedness. Like slowing down a car, you want your conclusion to lead to the end of your speech slowly and gently. You never want to slam on the breaks!



### *How to Signal the End of Your Speech*

There are several ways you can indicate to your audience that you have reached the end of your speech. The easiest way is to directly tell them by using concluding transitional phrases at the beginning of your conclusion. Phrases such as “in closing,” “in conclusion,” and “finally” are familiar concluding signposts.

Another good way to indicate you are approaching the end of your speech is to change the tone of your voice. In general, people naturally slow down their rate of speech and lower their tone of voice at the end of a sentence or paragraph. By doing this, your audience will intuitively know that you are reaching the end of your presentation.

### *Create a Sense of Closure*

If you end your speech abruptly your audience will feel confused and uncomfortable. To make sure you leave your audience feeling positive about your speech, give them closure with your ending.

One way to increase an audience's sense of closure is to tie your conclusion back to your introduction. This can most effectively be done by circling back to your initial attention grabber. To create clever closing lines, speakers often find a new way to reference the personal anecdote, quotation, statistic, rhetorical question, or other device first shared in the introduction.

### ***Make a Lasting Impression***

Your conclusion is the last thing your audience is going to hear from you—and will become your audience's lasting impression of everything you've said. For this reason, your conclusion is the perfect opportunity to reinforce the key elements of your speech in your audience's mind.

Make sure that you reiterate the thesis statement from your introduction, highlight the most important points from your speech, and then relate the concepts of the speech back to reality so your audience can see how it is applicable to their world.

### **Summarize**

Think of your conclusion as an opportunity to summarize. Summarizing means succinctly communicating a complex or lengthy idea. In the context of your speech, it means concisely revisiting what you've just been speaking about in a way that is accessible for your audience. Summaries should be lean, only including the most crucial information and ideas.

The best way to summarize ideas in your conclusion is to ask yourself the following important questions:

- What is the primary message I want my speech to communicate?
- What are the most important points of my speech that convey this message?
- What do I want my audience to take away from my speech?

When you know the answers to these three questions, you will be well on your way to preparing and delivering a conclusion that effectively summarizes the most important ideas from your speech.

### **From Concept to Action**

Take a moment to think about an upcoming speech you're planning. What ideas do you have for your introductory attention getter? If you haven't already selected something, begin by conducting a quick online search for a notable quotation about your topic. Next, consider how you could match this attention getter in your conclusion with something of equal weight. Sharing a personal anecdote or an inspirational narrative can often be effective. As you search for material for your conclusion, you may discover that—to keep your speech in balance—you actually need to strengthen your introduction.

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"Road Sign Asphalt Road Sign Roadsign Slow." Pixabay. <https://pixabay.com/photos/road-sign-asphalt-road-sign-90390/>. Accessed 7 May 2019. [CC0]

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