

Types of Transitions

Brief: There are many types of transitions to choose from that allow a speaker to bring his or her unique voice and individual style to the speech delivery.

Learning Objective: Identify different types of transitions.

Key Terms:

- **Segue:** To move smoothly from one state or subject to another.
- **Transitional phrase:** A phrase that indicates when a speaker has finished one thought and is moving onto another one.

Choosing Your Best Transitions

Transitions enable the flow of a speech. A speech without transitions will lack cohesiveness, making it difficult for an audience to follow.

As you craft your speech, you will need to transition from one point to the next to fully articulate your purpose or objectives. When read aloud, your speech should flow smoothly from introduction to body, from main point to main point, and then finally into your conclusion.

Fortunately, there are many types of transitions that you will be able to choose from that allow you to bring your unique voice and individual style to your speech delivery.

Types of Transitions

There are different types of transitional phrases often used in speeches, including:

- **Temporal transitions:** These are time-related words and phrases such as “before and after,” “next,” and “finally.”
- **Equality transitions:** These highlight points of equal importance using words and phrases such as “in addition” or “moreover.”
- **Causality transitions:** These show cause and effect using words such as “therefore” and “because.”
- **Compare and contrast:** These show similarities and differences using words and phrases such as “however” or “on the other hand.”

The Art of the Segue

To move from one point to the next, it's important to segue. Sometimes your points may share similar themes or concepts; order your points in such a way as to capitalize on those similarities.

You can also use opposition to present contrasting main points. If you have multiple pieces of supporting evidence, you may need to transition between examples so that your audience knows you are furthering a point with another example, anecdote, or set of researched data.

Internal Previews

Internal previews are more detailed than simple transitional phrases, but serve a similar function. While the preview in the introduction discloses to the audience the general points to be made in the speech, the internal preview outlines critical points to be made within the body of the speech.

Internal previews cue the audience to listen for the key elements within major points. Examples of internal previews include statements like "there are a couple of points I would like to make here," and "there is both a problem and a solution to propose," or "there are several items to note in this section." These statements might be followed by more detailed (but brief) explanations of what is to come in the speech.

Internal Summaries

Internal summaries, in contrast to internal previews, review the key points a speaker just made. These regular summaries help the audience to remember the key points just articulated by the speaker.

Examples of internal summaries include statements like "I have reviewed...", "Now that I have talked about a couple of the key points," or "to summarize briefly what was just discussed...." Each of these statements might be followed by more specific (but brief) summaries. Internal summaries reinforce the key issues in the speech.

Signposts

Signposts are often the numerical indications of the main body points. Many speakers utilize "first, second, third" numbering to indicate where they are in their speech.

Signposts allow an audience to remember the key points and follow along in the speech. They serve to clearly distinguish the introduction, main body points, and conclusion.

From Concept to Action

Combining your verbal transitions with body language cues that reinforce your words can go a long way to making sure that your audience stays with your train of thought throughout your speech. With appropriate pauses, gestures, movements, and facial expressions, you can add emphasis where needed. At the same time you're selecting the actual words and phrases you'll be including in your speech delivery, consider how you might reinforce those transitions with your body language. Experiment with matching your transitions with a variety of pauses, gestures, movements, and expressions until you discover what works best for you.

OER TEXT SOURCES:

"Segue." Wiktionary. <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/segue>. Accessed 9 May 2019. [CC BY-SA 3.0]

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