

Consider Organizational Styles

Brief: The topical, chronological, spatial, comparative, problem-solution, and causal methods of arrangement are common organizational styles well-suited to informative speeches, inspirational, and entertain speeches, as well as some persuasive speeches.

Learning Objective: Identify the best organizational style for your main points.

Key Terms:

- **Causal Style:** Organization form that informs audience members about causes and effects that have already happened.
- **Chronological Style:** Organization form used when main points are delivered according to when they happened.
- **Comparative Style:** Organization form that compares the similarities and differences between two or more things.
- **Problem-Solution:** Organization form that shares a problem and then presents possible solutions.
- **Spatial Style:** Organization form used to arrange main points according to their physical and geographic relationships.
- **Topical Style:** Organization form used when the main points of a speech revolve around ideas that aren't bound by a pre-determined relationship.

Organizational Styles

After creating your draft outline and deciding which main points and sub-points to include in your speech, make final decisions about how you'll organize those points. The topical, chronological, spatial, comparative, problem-solution, and causal methods of arrangement are well-suited to informative speeches, inspirational speeches, and entertainment speeches, as well as some persuasive speeches.

Topical Organization

A topical organization is one of the most common arrangements for speeches, used when the main points of your speech revolve around ideas that aren't bound by a pre-determined relationship (such as in a chronological speech bound by the elements of time). In a topical speech, main points are developed separately and presented in the order of preference of the speaker.

For example, a speech about the departments that comprise a newspaper organization is a good fit for a topical organization because the four departments highlighted are equally important to the function of the company:

- I. The advertising department sells display advertisements to local and national businesses.
- II. The editorial department produces the written content of the newspaper, including feature stories.
- III. The production department lays out the pages and manages pre-press work such as distilling the pages and processing colors.
- IV. The business department processes payments from advertisers, employee paperwork, and the bi-weekly payroll.

Chronological Organization

When you speak about events that are linked together by time, it is sensible to employ the chronological organization style. In a chronological speech, main points are delivered according to when they happened. Arranging main points in chronological order can be helpful when describing historical events to an audience, as well as when the order of events is necessary to understand what you wish to convey. Chronological style also makes sense when you tell the story of someone's life or career.

Spatial Organization

Another way to organize the points of a speech is through a spatial speech, which arranges main points according to their physical and geographic relationships. The spatial style is an especially useful organization style when the importance of the main point is derived from its location or directional focus.

Comparative Organization

When you need to discuss the similarities and differences between two or more things, such as apples and oranges, a comparative organizational pattern can be employed. In crafting comparative speeches, you may choose to compare things in a couple of different ways. You could compare two or more things as whole (e.g., discuss all traits of an apple and then all traits of an orange). Or, you could compare two or more things element by element (e.g., color of each, smell of each, and taste of each).



Problem-Solution Organization

The problem-solution style is often used in persuasive speeches because it's especially useful when the speaker wants to convince the audience that they should address an issue in a particular way, but it can also be used for informative speeches. Sometimes the best way to share your information is to present a problem and then present possible solutions.

Causal Organization

Similar to a problem-solution speech, a causal speech informs audience members about causes and effects that have already happened. A causal speech can be particularly effective when the speaker wants to share the relationship between two things, like the use of a vaccine to combat disease.

From Concept to Action

Review your draft outline and the main points and sub-points that you've identified. What's the first organizational style that comes to mind? Which organizational style do you think is the most obvious choice? Next, ask yourself, "If I couldn't use my first choice, what would be my second choice for an organizational style?" Next, use the two styles you selected to organize your main points and sub-points. Compare the results. Do you prefer style one or style two? Why?

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"Orange Nuts Apple Advent Christmas Red Delicious." Pixabay. <https://pixabay.com/photos/orange-nuts-apple-advent-christmas-2857336/> Accessed 27 April 2019. [CC0]

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