Choosing a Topic: The first step in developing a speech is choosing your topic. In the classroom, your topic might be assigned to you, but often it will be your choice. Outside the classroom, you will be asked to speak on your area of expertise.

Choosing speech topic- Guidelines:
1) Choosing something that you are interested in. This might sound obvious, but some speakers try to choose a topic that they think their audience will find interesting. Remember that if you are interested in your topic, you will be excited about sharing information, your enthusiasm will be evident to your audience, and you will both benefit.
2) Choose something you are familiar with. If you choose a topic you know nothing about, you will have to first research the material, then work to understand what you have read, then talk about it to other people. This is not recommended because your lack of knowledge will be obvious to your audience, she you will surely lose interest in your topic yourself.
3) Choose something that you can make relevant to your audience. You do not need to worry about choosing a topic that will interest your listeners. If you show your audience how your information will affect them, they will become interested. Work hard to show your audience the relevance of your material.

Why are you speaking?
1) General Purpose: Whenever you speak, you need to be aware of why you are speaking. What is the goal of your presentation, and what is your goal as a speaker? You always want to have a general purpose. The general purpose is your overall reason for speaking. You can speak to inform, to persuade, to motivate, or to entertain. Some speakers are never clear on what their overall goal is, and therefore, the audience gets confused as well.
   a. When your goal is to inform. Your job becomes of that of an information giver. You want to communicate information as clearly and accurately as possible.
   b. When your goal is to persuade. Your job is to influence the members of your audience to think or feel or act in a certain way. You will give them information, but you will organize that information into arguments that will, hopefully, change or reinforce the attitudes and actions of your audience members.
   c. When your goal is to motivate. You want to move your audience to take an action. You can motivate them to begin walking instead of driving to the nearest grocery store because it will help cut down on pollution in the environment.
   d. When your goal is to entertain. Your job is to inform, persuade, or motivate in a way that makes the audience have fun while you can accomplish your goal.
2) **Specific Purpose**: The second objective you need to be clear about is what you want to accomplish with your presentation. This is called your **Specific Purpose**. With the general purpose, you know what your goal is as the speaker. With the specific purpose, you can decide what your goals are for the audience. Do you want them to understand the steps involved in applying for the study-abroad program? Do you want them to believe that they can help prevent global warming? These are examples of goals you have for your listeners after they hear your speech.

**Guidelines for specific purpose statement:**

a. Limit your specific purpose so that it has **only one clear idea**. There should not be any “ands,” “buts,” or “ors” in a specific purpose statement because that sets up more than one clear idea.

b. Make sure that your specific purpose is **written as a statement** and not as a question.

c. Make your specific purpose as **focused as possible**.

d. Avoid **abstract or figurative language** in your specific purpose.

3) **Central Idea**: The third thing you need to have is a **central idea** or **thesis statement**. The central idea should sum up your speech in a single sentence. Once again, this is a component that helps you and your speech stay focused. It is more focused than your specific purpose, and it is written as a single declarative statement.

**EXAMPLE:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic:</th>
<th>Benefits of reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General purpose:</td>
<td>To inform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific purpose:</td>
<td>To inform my audience that there are three benefits of reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Idea:</td>
<td>Reading is beneficial because it’s educational, fun, and healthy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Organizing the Speech**: Every speech or presentation that you do should be organized with an opening, a middle, and an end. These are usually referred to as the introduction, the body, and the conclusion.

**A. The Introduction**: in the introduction we want to accomplish **five things**:

1) **Grab The Attention of Your Audience.** You need to spend a lot of time deciding how to begin because this is where your audience decides whether they will continue to listen to you. Here are some examples of ways you can successfully get the attention of your audience. Keep in mind that whichever one you choose; it should relate to your topic.

   i. Ask a question

   ii. Make startling facts

   iii. Begin with a quotation

   iv. Tell a brief story or anecdote

   v. Intriguing Statements
vi. Dramatic Story/ Build Suspense  
vii. Literature Reference  
viii. Humor  
ix. Rhetorical Question  
x. Illustrations, Examples, and Anecdotes  
xi. Physically Involve the Audience  
xii. Relate Personal Experience  
xiii. Use A Visual or Media Aid  
xiv. Refer to the Situation  

xv. Poem (See the Public Speaking Libguide on Poetry Reading)

2) **State Your Topic:** one mistake that some speakers make is never clarifying their topic. They assume that because they know what their topic is, it will be obvious to their audience. Don’t ever assume. It’s better to clarify this in the introduction of your speech so that your audience isn’t confused.

3) **Establish Your Credibility:** Credibility in a speech refers to believability. Why should your audience members believe what you say? Remember that credibility lies in the eyes of your listeners. They are the ones who decide whether to believe you. Therefore, one way to establish credibility is to explain to your listeners why you are giving the speech. You first establish your credibility in the introduction of your speech, and then you continue to support your credibility throughout your speech with your clear organization, use of supporting materials, dynamic delivery, and adherence to your time limits.

4) **Establish Your Goodwill:** *Goodwill* means showing your audience you have their best interest in mind.

5) **Preview Your Main Points:** Here is where you tell the audience exactly what you will cover in the body of your speech by previewing each main point. The preview statement provides the transition needed between the introduction and the body of the speech.

**B. The Body** of the speech is where the majority of your information is found. This is where your main points, supporting points, evidence, arguments, descriptions, and transitions all go.

1) **Pattern of Organization.** Your speech pattern will determine which pattern of organization will work best for you. You can choose from the following patterns of organization
   i. Chronological pattern of organization
   ii. Topical order
   iii. Spatial order
   iv. Cause-Effect
   v. Problem-solution
vi. Monroe’s motivated sequence

(See Sample Outlines of Speeches)

C. Main Points

When you are writing your main points, remember a few guidelines:

a) Keep the main points simple. You should have only one idea per main point. That means no conjunctions such as and, or, and but.

b) Keep the main points balanced. You should have equal amounts of information in each main point. An easy way to keep up with this is to look over your outline. You should have roughly the same number of sub-and supporting points for each main point.

c) Make sure the main points look similar. The wording of the main points should be parallel in structure whenever possible.

D. Connectives

1) Transitions and Signposts

Transition can be a word/phrase that lets the audience know that you are done talking about one idea and you are moving on to the next idea. Signposts also serve as bridges, but they are identified as key words or phrases that point to what the speaker is covering.

(Please see PowerPoint Slide Presentation on Transitional Words)

2) Internal Previews – tell your audience what will be coming next.

i. Today we will look at…

ii. We’ll examine…

iii. In this speech, we’ll look at…

iv. In this speech, we’ll see that it’s never...

3) Internal Summaries – are great tools to use in longer presentations to help your audience keep pace with your speech. They allow you to review the information you have already covered before you move on to the next part of the speech.

E. Supporting Material

1) Statistics

i. Use statistics sparingly

ii. Make the numbers relevant

iii. Explain any statistics you use

iv. Make sure your statistics come from a reliable source

v. Identify the source of your statistics

vi. Round off complicated numbers

vii. Use a visual to help explain or clarify your statistics

2) Testimony

i. Expert – comes from someone who is a recognized expert or authority in their field to support what you say
ii. **Peer** – comes from people who have knowledge or an opinion on a subject, but they are not a recognized expert in the field

3) **Examples** – this form of supporting material can add richness, relevancy, and a personal touch to your speech and are great tools for clarifying information.

   i. **Brief**
   
   ii. **Extended**
   
   iii. **Hypothetical**

F. **Purpose of Conclusion** – leaves an equally important final impression

   - Summarize the information in the speech
   - Reemphasize the central idea in a memorable way
   - Motivating Listeners
   - Restate the main Ideas creating closure

**Use the following effective conclusions:**

   - Thanking as Transition
   - Call to Action
   - Use a dramatic Illustration
   - Conclude With a Quotation
   - Conclude with a Metaphor That Broadens the Meaning of Your Speech
   - Conclude with Humor
   - Encourage Thought with a Rhetorical Question
   - Refer to Your Introduction
     - Starting Facts/ Intriguing Statements
     - Dramatic Story/ Build Suspense
     - Quotation and/or Literature Reference
     - Humor
     - Ask a Question
     - Rhetorical Question
     - Illustrations, Examples, and Anecdotes
     - Physically Involve the Audience
     - Relate personal Experience
     - Use A Visual or Media Aid
     - Refer to the situation
     - Poem (See the Public Speaking Libguide on Poetry Reading)
     - Other??

**Common Pitfalls of Conclusions** knowing what not to do is almost as important as knowing what to do

   - Don’t use your conclusion to introduce a new topic
   - Don’t apologize
   - Don’t end abruptly
   - Don’t change the mood or tone
• Don’t use the phrases “In Summary or “In conclusion” except when you are actually at the end of your speech
  o Don’t ever end your speech with the following:
    • That’s it!
    • That’s all!
    • That’s all I have!
    • The End!
    • I’m done!

G. Citing Sources – tell the audience the source of your information. State the source before you state the material. This shows the credibility of the upcoming quotation or example or statistic before you state that information.

(Samples can be found on Page 163-164)

(Please refer EASYBIB to help your computer generate your citations properly.
http://www.easybib.com/

Also, do not use Wikipedia!

YOU MUST HAVE THREE REFERENCES! No EXCEPTIONS! Failure to cite at least three sources will result in a “F” grade for the speech.
**Chronological Pattern of Organization.** You use this pattern of organization when your topic refers to the steps in a process, the development of something over time, or a demonstration. Your main points will follow a time pattern.

For example:

**Topic:** Process of applying to graduate school  
**Specific purpose:** To inform my audience that there are three steps in the process of applying to graduate school.

**Main points:**

i. The first step in applying to graduate school is to complete the application.

ii. The second step in applying to graduate school is to obtain three letters of recommendation.

iii. The third step is to mail all the materials to graduate office at your school of choice.

**Topic:** Growing apples  
**Specific purpose:** To inform my audience about four stages of apple growing.

**Main points:**

i. First, in the spring, the orchards are prepared by pruning and getting ready for the sprayers.

ii. Second, in the summer the orchards are sprayed for bugs and disease control.

iii. Third, in the fall, the fruit is harvested and stored.

iv. Finally, in the winter, the orchards are pruned.
Topical order. This pattern is used when your main points do not have to be in a specific order. Topical order is used when your topic naturally subdivides into subtopics. Each of the subtopics becomes a main point.

For example:

**Topic:** Three aspects of vocal variety  
**Specific purpose:** To inform my audiences about three aspects of vocal variety.

**Main points:**
- i. One aspect of vocal variety is rate.  
- ii. The second aspect of vocal variety is expressiveness  
- iii. The third aspect of vocal variety is the pause.

**Topic:** It’s not too late to learn new things.  
**Specific purpose:** To inform my audience that it’s never too late to learn something new.

**Main points:**
- i. It’s never too late to start a new hobby.  
- ii. It’s never too late to start a new friendship.  
- iii. It’s never too late to start a bad habit.
**Sample Informative Speech Outline in Topical Order**

**INTRODUCTION**
I. Your attention-getting statement goes here—you can ask a question; make a startling statement; tell a short, related anecdote; etc.
   Whatever you use here *must* relate to your topic.
II. This is where you reveal the topic of your speech: “Today we will look at three types of wood used in the building industry.”
III. Establish your credibility and goodwill. Credibility is your believability—why we should listen to you give this speech. Goodwill shows your listeners what’s in it for them. You give your audience a reason to listen to your information. Let them know how they will benefit from listening. (Credibility and goodwill can also be separate steps.)
IV. Preview statement: “Today we will look at the three types of wood used in building: cherry, oak, and walnut.” (You forecast the main points you will cover in this speech.)

**Body**
I. Statement of your first main point. “One type of wood used in the building industry is cherry.” (This should be a full sentence. It is never a source.)
   A. This is where you put your subpoints: “Cherry can be used in making a beautiful and durable door for homes.”
      1. The detail or supporting point goes here. “According to the November 2006 edition of *Tree* magazine, …”
      2. You add more supporting details here.
      3. You might need a third supporting detail here.
   B. This is where your second subpoint goes. “Cherry can also be used for building doors on sailing yachts.”
      1. “As stated by captain John W. Hughes of the American Yachting Company…”
      2. A supporting point here.
      3. A supporting point here.

**Transition.** Now that we’ve looked at the use of cherry wood, let’s move on to another type of wood used in building.

II. The second type of wood used in building is oak.
   A. This is your subpoint. You can talk about one place oak is used—maybe in furniture or some kind?
      1. This is supporting detail. It can be an example, testimony in quotation form, or a statistic.
      2. This is supporting detail.
   B. This is your second subpoint.
      1. Supporting detail.
      2. Supporting detail.

**Transition.** Now that we’ve seen how cherry and oak are used in building, let’s move on to our final type of wood.

III. Walnut is the third type of wood used in building.
   A. Many top executives choose walnut for their desks.
1. Supporting material here. It could be an example, a quotation or a statistic.
2. Supporting material here.
3. Supporting material here.

B. Second subpoint.
   1. Supporting material.
   2. Supporting material.
   3. Supporting material.

Conclusion.
   I. **Restate your main points.** “In conclusion, we’ve seen that cherry, oak, and walnut are three types of wood used in building.”
   II. **Close with an impact.** This can be a startling statement, a question, an anecdote, etc.
**Spatial order.** You use this pattern of organization when your main points need to follow a directional pattern. This is not the same as chronological pattern because, in that pattern, you have to talk about your main points in a specific order. If you don’t, the steps in the process won’t work, or the development of an idea or theory or event won’t happen. With spatial order, your points follow a directional pattern, but you decide on which direction. Directional patterns include from left to right, east to west, west to east, north to south, top to bottom, from bottom to top, from outside in or inside out. Don’t be intimidated by this pattern. It sounds tricky, but the directional pattern of the main points will help your audience picture what you are talking about.

**Topic:** Three national parks  
**Specific purpose:** To inform my audience about three of the most well-known national parks in the United States.

**Main points:**

i. Cape Hatteras National Seashore is located along the coast of eastern North Carolina.
   
ii. Yellowstone National Park is located in the northwest corner of Wyoming and the southeast corner of Montana.
   
iii. Yosemite National Park is located east of San Francisco in California.

The directional order that the speaker has chosen is east to west. He/she could have just easily started with Yosemite National Park and moved to Yellowstone National Park and then to Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

These three patterns of organization—chronological, topical, and spatial—are most often used in informative speeches. Following is a sample outline format that shows the use of topical order.
**Cause—Effect.** This persuasive pattern organizes your main points to show a cause and effect. With this pattern of organization, there are only two main points. Your first main point can show the cause and the second can show the effect or you can decide to use your first main point to show the effect and the second main point to show the cause. Your topic will help you decide which order to follow.

For example:

**Topic:** Slow down.

**Specific purpose:** To persuade my audience that their fast-paced lifestyle is causing two problems.

**Main problems:**

i. We all have a lifestyle that is too hectic (cause).

ii. We are missing out on the good things in life, and our stress level is too high (effect).

**Topic:** Self-defense

**Specific purpose:** To inform my audience that self-defense knowledge is a necessary tool for personal safety.

**Main points:**

i. You will feel safer if you know you can defend yourself (effect).

ii. You can learn three basic self-defense moves that will help you feel safer (cause).
Problem—Solution. This pattern of organization is used when you want to present a problem and then you present a solution to solve that problem. With this pattern, you will have two main points: The first main point will show the need or the problem, and the second main point will show a plausible solution to the problem.

For example:

**Topic:** Our national parks are in trouble.

**Specific purpose:** To inform my audience that our national parks need help.

**Main points:**

i. Our national park system is in trouble.

ii. You must support our park system by supporting the National Park Conservation Association.
Monroe’s Motivated Sequence
Sample Outline Format

Introduction
I. Attention—really work to make the audience sit up and listen to your speech
II. Reveal topic—tell us what your speech will be about
III. Goodwill and credibility—tell us why you are giving this speech and tell us why we should listen. What’s in it for us?
IV. Preview statement—preview your main points exactly as you would discuss them.

Body
I. Need—describes problem in a way that motivates the audience to see a need for change
   A. Statement of problem—details, description
      1. Stories, examples, statistics
      2. Support
      3. More support if necessary
   B. Ramification—what are the consequences of this problem?
      1. Supporting material
      2. Support
      3. More support if necessary
   C. Pointing—make it clear to the audience how they are directly affected by this problem and why they should care.
      1. Support
      2. Support
      3. Support

Transition—now that...
II. Satisfaction—presents a specific solution
   A. Statement of proposed solution
      1. Support
      2. Support
   B. Explanation of solutions
      1. Support
      2. Support
      3. Support
   C. Meeting objections—anticipate objections, address and refute them.
      1. Support
      2. Support

Transition—now that...
III. Visualization—paint a mental picture of your audience
   A. Positive—how things will change for the better if your plan is adopted.
      1. Support
      2. Support
   B. Negative—what will the negative consequences be if your plan is not adopted?
      1. Support
      2. Support
   C. Comparison of the positive and negative
      1. Examples and support
2. Examples and support

Conclusion
I. **Action**—provide a call to action
   A. Summarize main points
   B. Statement of desired action or attitude change
   C. Close with impact

Works Cited
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample Presentation Topics using Different Patterns of Organization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Google, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Purpose:</strong> To inform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific Purpose:</strong> To inform my audience about Google, Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis Statement:</strong> Google, Inc. is a global technology company with a rich history, innovative products and services, and a renowned organizational culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization Patterns:</strong> Topical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> The recession of 2007-2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Purpose:</strong> To inform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific Purpose:</strong> To inform my audience about the events contributing to the recession of 2007-2009.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis Statement:</strong> The recession of 2007-2009 was marked by the deflated housing bubble, the bankruptcy of large banks, and an ensuing global economic contraction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization Patterns:</strong> Chronological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> University Traffic Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Purpose:</strong> To inform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific Purpose:</strong> To inform my audience about the development of the traffic plan at Eastern University.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis Statement:</strong> Eastern University develops transportation plans in a way that relieves congestion and enhances parking for North Campus, South Campus, and Central Campus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization Patterns:</strong> Spatial/Geographical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Employee Wellness Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Purpose:</strong> To inform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific Purpose:</strong> To inform my audience about the ways an employee wellness plan can offset health care expenses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis Statement:</strong> Health insurance costs at Greco, Inc. are decreasing due to smoking cessation programs, weight management clinics, and ergonomic troubleshooting workshops.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization Patterns:</strong> Cause-Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong> Motivation at Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General Purpose:</strong> To inform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specific Purpose:</strong> To inform my audience about how different organizational motivation structures can positively influence motivation levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thesis Statement:</strong> Traditional approaches to organizational motivation focus too heavily on extrinsic motivators, but creating more participative workplaces that stress autonomy can greatly increase motivation and productivity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization Pattern:</strong> Problem-Solution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Five Basic Types of Business and Professional Presentations

1. **Sales presentations.** In a *sales presentation*, you are attempting to lead a potential buyer to purchase a service or product that you describe in your presentation.

2. **Technical reports.** A *technical report* gives detailed information about a procedure or a device. Audiences for this type of presentation can vary from one person to a large group, and generally, someone in the audience is in charge of making decisions. Depending on the subject at hand, the report can be formal and relatively brief and loosely structured.

3. **Staff reports.** A *staff report* informs managers and other employees of new developments that directly affect them and their work. These reports can involve a new plan or a report on the completion of a project or a task. The audiences is usually made up of a group, but could just be an individual. Staff reports usually include a statement of the problem or question under consideration, a description and a discussion of pertinent facts, and a statement of conclusion followed by recommendations.

4. **Progress reports.** A *progress report* updates clients or principles on developments within an ongoing project. The audience can vary greatly, and questions from them are usually common. There is no set patterns for a progress report, but they often begin with a brief overview of the progress up to the time of the last report.

5. **Investigative report.** These are a study of a problem that includes recommendations, and they are usually conducted by a person or group outside the organization. The audience is usually made up of a group who’s planning and decisions on a matter depend significantly on the results of the investigation, and it follows one of two forms. First, the *indirect method* presents conclusions and recommendations lasts, after background of the issue, a problem statement, the method of investigation, the findings, conclusions, and ending with recommendations for a plan of action. The *direct method* begins with conclusions and recommendations, then describes the problem, the method used to investigate, and the chief findings.
Sample Persuasive Speech Outline in Problem-Solution Order

Introduction

I. Open with impact/attention-getting statement.
II. Reveal your topic.
III. Establish credibility—show your audience you are qualified to give this speech; and goodwill—show your audience why they should listen.

Body

I. Statement of first main point. This should be a clear statement that states the problem. Remember that main points are not sources. First you state the point and then you support the point.
   A. This is your subpoint. It adds support to your main point. Each main point should be fully developed with at least two subpoints. These can be examples, quotations, statistics, descriptions, etc.
      1. This is your supporting point. It gives even more clarity to your main point.
      2. Another supporting point here. Use emotional appeal.
      3. Perhaps one more supporting point. You might have only two supporting points—depends on your topic and time limits.

   B. This is your second subpoint. It continues to backup or strengthen your main point. It might even be a counterargument. A counterargument states a possible objection to your claim and then (with sources and other material) shows why your argument is stronger. Counterargument are very important to use in persuasive speaking because your audience WILL have objections in mind. You as the speaker need to anticipate the strongest objection and show why your point is stronger. Remember that you don’t want your objection to be a main point because that would give it too much importance. You really just want to show your audience that you are aware that there are other sides to the story, but that your claim is the strongest.

      1. Supporting point here that backs up your main point and subpoints.
      2. Another supporting point here—use emotional appeal. Emotional appeal can be used throughout the speech. This is just an example of where you might put it.
      3. Another persuasive point.
Transition. This let’s your audience know that you are done talking about the problem and are moving on to the solution.

II. This is your second main point—it should clearly state the solution you propose.
   A. This is a subpoint that backs up your main point.
      1. A supporting point goes here. Again, don’t forget emotional appeal.
      2. Another supporting point here—perhaps a counterargument.
      3. If you like, a third supporting point.
   B. Your second subpoint that clearly adds support to your main point.
      1. Supporting point here—use emotional appeal.
      2. Supporting point here—use emotional appeal.
      3. Third supporting point.

Conclusion.
   I. Restate main points—problem and solution.
   II. Close with impact.