

RIT | Expressive Communication Center

Preparation and Presentation/Speaking Outlines

There are two types of outlines: full-sentence **preparation outlines** and keyword **presentation/speaking outlines**.

Preparation outlines includes full sentences, making up a full script of an entire speech. However, the preparation outline is *for planning purposes only* and should be translated into a shorter, more succinct **presentation/speaking outline** before the speech is delivered.

Presentation/speaking outlines includes brief phrases or keywords that remind the speaker of their main ideas, plus supporting material and transitions/signposts. Speakers will refer to this outline for quick reminders and to ensure that they do not omit any important information. Because this outline uses just words and phrases, it can easily be transferred to index cards.

Preparation Outline Template

Specific purpose: A single infinitive phrase that combines the general purpose, the audience, and the objective. For example, “To inform my audience about the history of net neutrality in the United States.”

Central idea/Thesis: A single sentence that encapsulates your main ideas—what you expect to say in order to achieve your specific purpose.

Introduction

Write everything you expect to say in the introduction. It can be formatted as a paragraph or outlined. The best approach is to “label” all the parts/functions of the Introduction.

- I. Grab attention: An opening hook (question, fact, quote, etc.) to grab attention and pique interest.
- II. Reveal topic: Include a topic sentence.
- III. Relate to audience: How the topic relates to the audience/why they should care.
- IV. Establish credibility: Your connection to the topic and where your knowledge comes from.
- V. Preview main ideas: A sentence suggesting the number, content and strategic ordering of your main ideas.

(Transition: use when needed)

Body

Include 2-5 main ideas. Main ideas should be simple, discrete, coherent, complete, and essential to achieving the thesis.

- I. First main idea stated as a full sentence with parallelism when possible.
 - A. Sub-point written as a full sentence.
 - 1) Sub-sub point written as a full sentence.
 - 2) Sub-sub point written as a full sentence.
 - B. Sub-point written as a full sentence.
 - 1) Sub-sub point written as a full sentence.
 - 2) Sub-sub point written as a full sentence.

(Transition: if needed)

- II. Second main idea stated as a full sentence with parallelism when possible.
 - A. Sub-point written as a full sentence.
 - 1) Sub-sub point written as a full sentence.
 - 2) Sub-sub point written as a full sentence.
 - B. Sub-point written as a full sentence.
 - 1) Sub-sub point written as a full sentence.
 - 2) Sub-sub point written as a full sentence.

(Transition: if needed)

- III. Third main idea stated as a full sentence with parallelism when possible.
 - A. Sub-point written as a full sentence.
 - 1) Sub-sub point written as a full sentence.
 - 2) Sub-sub point written as a full sentence.
 - B. Sub-point written as a full sentence.
 - 1) Sub-sub point written as a full sentence.
 - 2) Sub-sub point written as a full sentence.

(Transition: if needed)

Conclusion

Put down everything you expect to say in the conclusion. It can be formatted as a paragraph or outlined. The best approach is to “label” all the parts/functions of the conclusion:

- I. Signal the end: Indicate you are moving into your conclusion.
- II. Review main ideas: summarize or restate main ideas clearly.
- III. Final statement: End with a sense of finality; finish strong and deliberately.

Reference List