

# Outlining a Presentation

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Some people prepare two different outlines when they give a formal speech: a preparation outline and a speaking outline. The preparation outline is a complete outline of the content of the speech; composing it will help you develop your ideas and ensure that your speech is persuasive and logical. The speaking outline, in contrast, is a highly condensed outline specifically designed to remind you of your main points as you give your presentation.

## Writing a Preparation Outline

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Your preparation outline should include a summary sentence for every main point, supporting point, sub-supporting point, and transition in your speech. Be sure to write in complete sentences. Using complete sentences is helpful if someone, perhaps your instructor or a classmate, will be reviewing your speech before you present. In addition, writing your preparation outline in full sentences can help you see where you need to flesh out your ideas.

You don't, however, have to write out every word you intend to say; just offer a summary of the basic idea you plan to get across for every main point, supporting point, sub-supporting point, and transition in your speech.

## Sample Preparation Outline

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Here's a common format for a preparation outline. While it won't be appropriate for every situation or audience, it works for many kinds of presentations. Use it as a starting point and make adjustments as needed.

SPECIFIC PURPOSE: To inform/to persuade/to commemorate, etc.

CENTRAL IDEA:

TITLE:

### INTRODUCTION

- I. Attention-getter:
- II. Central Idea:
- III. Establish credibility and relate topic to audience:
- IV. Preview the main points:
- IIV. Transition:

### BODY

- I. Main Point: (A declarative sentence about the first main idea for your topic)
  - A. Supporting point:
    - 1. Sub-supporting point:
    - 2. Sub-supporting point:
  - B. Supporting point:
    - 1. Sub-supporting point:
    - 2. Sub-supporting point:

C. Supporting point: (If needed)

1. Sub-supporting point
2. Sub-supporting point

Transition:

II. Main Point: (A declarative sentence about the second main idea for your topic)

A. Supporting point:

1. Sub-supporting point:
2. Sub-supporting point:

B. Supporting point:

1. Sub-supporting point:
2. Sub-supporting point:

C. Supporting point: (If needed)

1. Sub-supporting point:
2. Sub-supporting point:

Transition:

III. Main Point: (A declarative sentence about the third idea about your topic, if needed)

A. Supporting point:

1. Sub-supporting point:
2. Sub-supporting point:

B. Supporting point:

1. Sub-supporting point:
2. Sub-supporting point:

C. Supporting point: (If needed)

1. Sub-supporting point:
2. Sub-supporting point:

Transition:

## **CONCLUSION**

I. Summary of the main points:

II. Restatement of the central idea:

III. Closing lines that relate back to the introduction:

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

List all of your sources using the documentation style (e.g., MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.) indicated by your instructor.

## References

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Lucas, S.E. (2008). *The Art of Public Speaking* (10th ed.). McGraw-Hill: New York.

Street, N.J. (2009). *Packet for Public Speaking: Comm. 203*, Spring 2009.

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