Organizing Your Speech

Starring

YOU

as the

King or Queen

of Organization!

Why Organize?

- Clear and coherent thoughts—a must for public speaking!
- So many main points and only so much time.
- Clear organization helps you select, interpret, organize… and eliminate!
- Material that flows well helps the audience remain attentive and focused.

Organizational Formats: Topical

- Most common speech format.
- Format focuses on certain aspects of a subject.
- In topical format, main points must be interrelated, balanced, logical, and consistent.
- Beware of “overwhelmed” main points!

Organizational Formats: Chronological

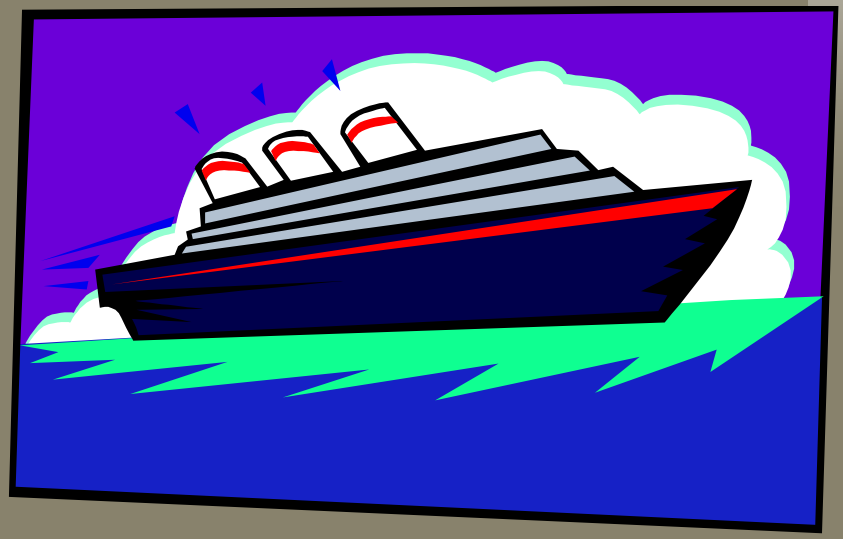
- Chronological
  - ✓ The speaker recounts a series or historical events in the order they happened.

- ✓ You would most likely use this format during your Speech to Teach.

Organizational Formats: Spatial

- Spatial

✓ Main points proceed focus on a location or a direction.



A speech about various parts of another ship would qualify!

Organizational Formats: Cause-Effect

- Content involves reasons for and consequences of an action or event.
- Main points can include causes first, then effects.
- Singular cause and effect relationships can also comprise main points.
- Sometimes, the result or effect would be first, then its causes would be outlined.

Organizational Formats: Problem-Solution

- Problem-solution is often used for persuasive speeches.
- Main points define the problem(s) and then propose solutions.
- Solutions can include those previously attempted and ones currently recommended.

What organizational method is used in the following sets of main points?

I. Cesar Chavez is best known for his efforts to protect the rights of Hispanic farm workers in California.

II. Cesar Chavez was also a tireless advocate for Hispanic racial and cultural pride in general.

Topical

Okay!

Yee-haw!
Chronological

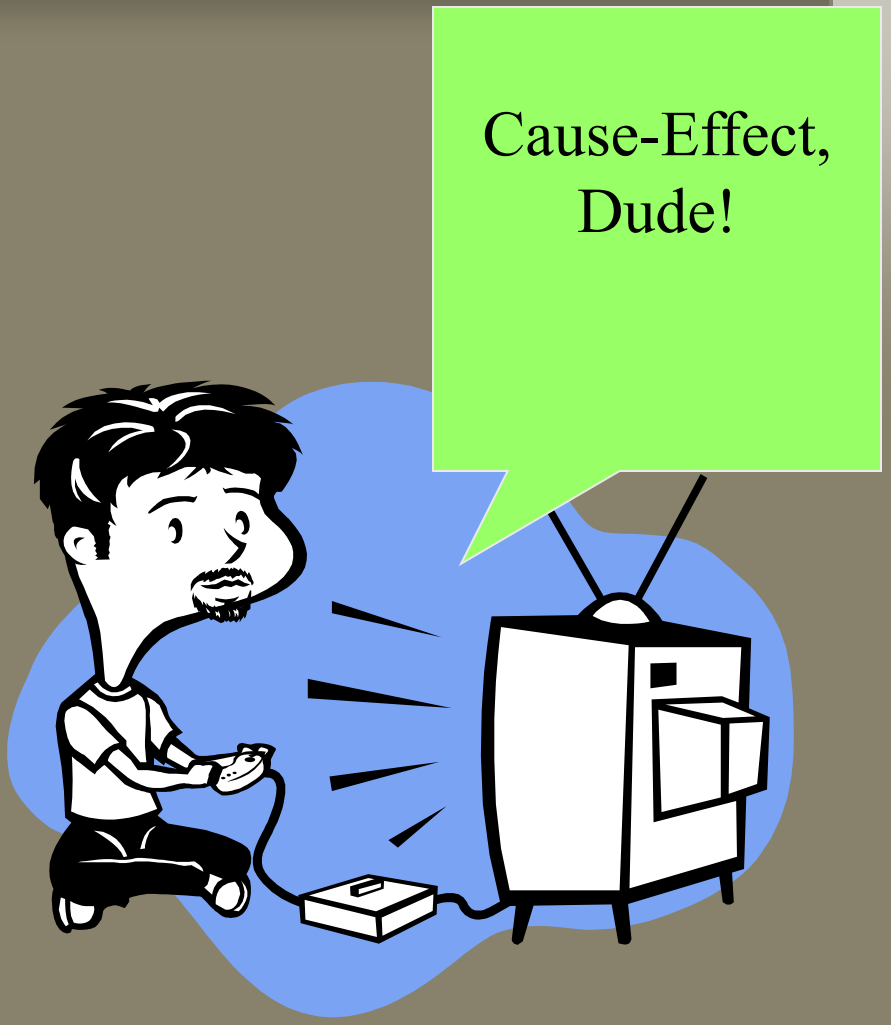
I. Rodeos began in the Old West as contests of skill among cowboys during cattle roundups.

II. By 1920 rodeos had become a popular spectator sport for the general public.

III. Today rodeos combine traditional western events with a circus-like atmosphere and the marketing techniques of big business.

I. Many teenagers enjoy playing violent videogames.

II. Some research indicates that playing violent videogames can lead to violent behavior.



I. Many citizens are victimized every year by incompetent lawyers.

II. A bill requiring lawyers to stand for recertification every ten years will do much to help solve the problem.

I. The outermost section of the ancient Egyptian burial tomb was the entrance passage.

II. The next section of the Egyptian burial tomb was the antechamber.

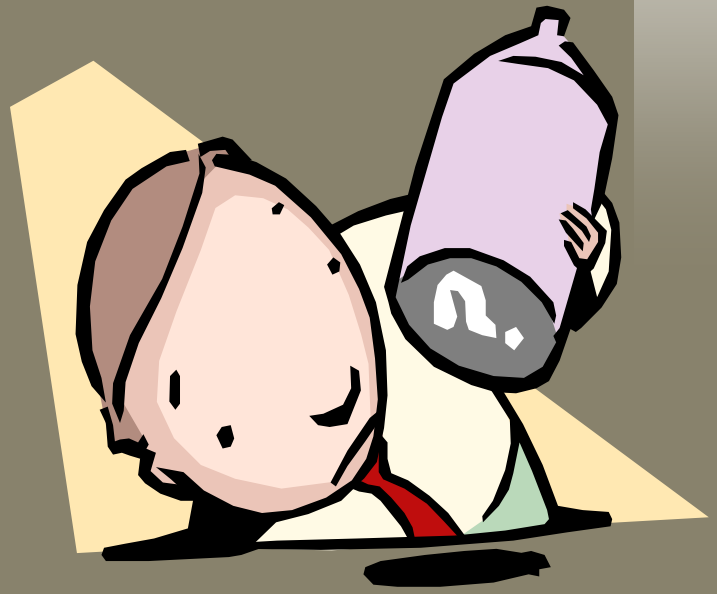
III. The third section of the Egyptian burial tomb was the treasury.

IV. The innermost section of the Egyptian burial tomb was the burial chamber.

Spatial

And this was the closest thing I could find to something Egyptian!

What organizational method (or methods) might you use to arrange main points for speeches with the following thesis statements?



To inform my audience about the major events in the development of the civil rights movement from 1955 to 1970.

(The most obvious choice for a speech with this thesis statement would be chronological order, but it could also be arranged topically.)

To inform my audience about the educational philosophy of Maria Montessori.

(This thesis statement would most likely be organized topically, with each main point dealing with a different aspect of Montessori's educational philosophy.)

To inform my audience about the geographical regions of the Philippines.

(This thesis statement would probably be organized spatially, though it could also be structured topically.)

To inform my audience about the major kinds of symbols used in traditional Native American art.

(Although a speech with this specific purpose would probably be arranged in topical order, it might be organized chronologically if the speaker were to deal with the changes in Native American art symbols over the years.)

Dealing with Main Points and Subpoints

- Form logical groupings of information.
- Create a brainstorming list or a rough outline.
- Ensure that main points correspond to the thesis statement.
- Remember, main points should be interrelated, but should not contain duplicate information as other points.
- If enough information cannot be located for a “healthy” main point, create a “catch-all.”
- Subpoints and subordinate points should always relate to the adjoining main point.
- Do not group completely unrelated subpoints.

Do these main points correspond to their thesis statements?

Thesis: Cats make better pets than dogs.

I. Cats are neater than dogs.
II. Cats are more independent than dogs.
III. Cats have an interesting life history in mythology and literature.
IV. Cats are loyal and affectionate.

Do these main points correspond to their thesis statements?

Thesis: A four-day work week would be beneficial to our company.

I. Employees will enjoy longer weekends.

II. Employees will miss rush hour traffic jams.

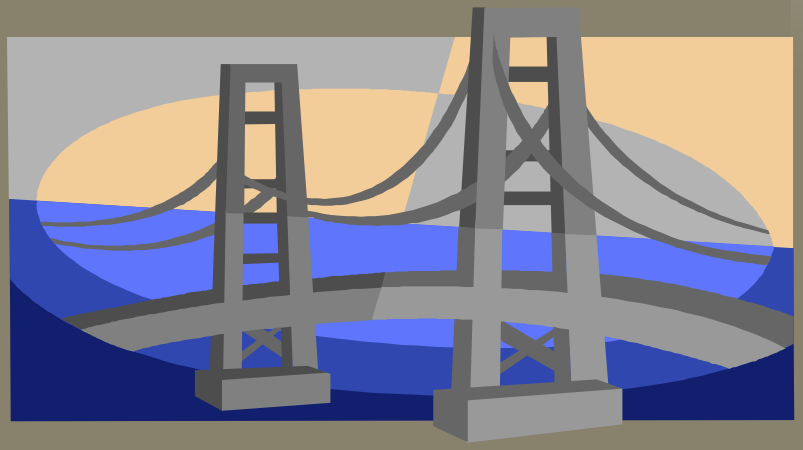
III. Employees can share child care more equitably.

Dealing with Subpoints

- Subpoints and subordinate points should relate to the main point.
- Subpoints should be equally important; if not, create a “catch-all.”
- No grouping of completely unrelated subpoints.

Bridging Main Points Via Connectives

- Transitions
- Signposts
- Internal previews
- Internal summaries



Using Transitions

- Signify that a speaker has completed one key theme and is moving into another.
- Can add “sidebars” of thoughts about aforementioned or about-to-be mentioned main points.
- Transitions should never include entirely new facts; these should be inserted into main points.
- Transitions should occur between each main point.

Examples of Transitions

Nonetheless…

Therefore…

In truth…

Important to remember…

To illustrate …

The solution to the problem is…

Along the same lines…

To recapitulate…

Using Signposts

- Signposts briefly indicate where a speaker is in the speech.
- Signposts help focus attention on certain key ideas.
- Signposts typically indicate that important material is coming.
- Signposts utilize specific words that instinctively tell an audience that something important is coming.

Examples of Signposts…

Important to remember

To illustrate

The solution to the problem is

Along the same lines

Let me recap

What follows is

First, Second, Third

But first let me begin by

The core of my argument is

Using Internal Previews

- Words within the speech content that indicate what information will be forthcoming.
- Internal previews help speech content flow smoothly.
- Internal previews are more specific to the current information shared, unlike the preview in the introduction, which highlights how the overall topic will be shared in a broader context.

Using Internal Summaries

- Words within the speech content that indicate what information has already been shared.
- Internal summaries are especially helpful after the final main point before reaching the speech conclusion.
- Internal summaries can be used in the speech conclusion to recap covered information.

Example: “Now that I’ve explained my ideal career, I’ll detail the benefits that this position offers.”

“The salary for a new teacher may
seem terribly high, but other benefits
perks to the career should be considered
in the overall compensation package.”