

## Why is structure important?

Well-organized speeches have several benefits for the audience as speeches are:

- Easier to understand
- Easier to remember
- More credible
- More enjoyable

## Speech preparation and structure overview

- Select your topic (*not too broad for 4-6 minutes; timely and relevant for your audience*)
- Determine the speech purpose (*to entertain, to convince/persuade, to inform, to inspire*)
- Make an outline / organized speech flow (*e.g. chronological, spatial, casual, comparative, topical, problem-solution*)
- Develop the Opening (*you can even learn it by heart*)
- Draft the Body (*do not write your whole speech down, it's better to just have a 'bullet point structure'*)
- Develop the Conclusion (*have the closing statement prepared – finish with power*)

## Opening

- Should immediately catch the audience's attention and tell them what you will be talking about.
- Good openings' examples:
  - A startling or a challenging question
  - An appropriate quotation, illustration or story
  - A display of some object or picture
  - An attention-getting generalization that ties in with your subject
- Weak openings' examples:
  - An apologetic statement
  - A joke or story that doesn't relate to your topic (or a joke nobody laughs at... be careful)
  - A commonplace observation delivered in a commonplace manner
  - A long or slow-moving statement or story
  - A trite question, such as "Did you ever stop to think...?"

## Body

- Main part of your speech
- Limit yourself to three main points (*facts, ideas*)
- Elaborate on each main point with subpoints (*they will make the speech more interesting, clarify main points, emphasize or prove the idea, make them stick*)
- Back subpoints with supporting material (*statistics, testimony, examples, stories or anecdotes, visual aids, facts*)

## Conclusion

- Final opportunity to ensure the audience remembers your message, to leave a lasting impression
- Do not introduce new material you might have forgotten or apologize for anything
- Summarize your points and conclude with a final remark (*challenge, question, anecdote, or quotation*)
- Finish forcefully and confidently