

How to Incorporate Expert Testimony

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

Once you have found experts to support your ideas, you may wonder how to incorporate their testimony into your speech. The following will give you an idea of how to incorporate expert testimony in order to support your argument and improve your speech. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. What the Body of Your Speech Should Include
2. Example of Incorporating Expert Testimony

1. What the Body of Your Speech Should Include

The body of your speech should help you elaborate and develop your main objectives clearly by using main points, subpoints, and support for your subpoints.

To ensure that your speech clearly communicates with your audience, try to limit both your main points and subpoints to three or four points each; this applies to your supporting points, as well. **Expert** testimony is considered supporting point; it is used to support the main and subpoints of your speech.

When a claim or point is made during a speech, the audience initially may be reluctant to concede or agree to the validity of the point. Often this is because the audience does not initially accept the speaker as a trustworthy authority. By incorporating expert testimony, the speaker is able to bolster their own authority to speak on the topic.

Therefore, expert testimony is commonly introduced after a claim is made.

➦ **EXAMPLE** If a speech makes the claim, "Manufacturing jobs have been in decline since the 1970s," it should be followed up with expert testimony to support that claim. This testimony could take a variety of forms, such as government employment statistics or a historian who has written on a particular sector of the manufacturing industry.

No matter the particular form of expert testimony, it is incorporated following a claim to defend and support that claim, thus bolstering the authority of the speaker.



TERM TO KNOW

Expert

3. Example of Incorporating Expert Testimony

Search for and watch a **TED** talk by Barry Schwartz, Professor of Social Theory and Social Action at Swarthmore College. Notice how Schwartz references expert testimony in the course of his speech to justify his point to the audience.



Schwartz begins by showing the job description of a hospital janitor, noting that the tasks do not require interaction with other people. However, Schwartz introduces the expert testimony of actual hospital janitors as a way to complicate the apparent solo nature of janitorial work. Schwartz personalizes the experts with proper names, "Mike," "Sharleene," and "Luke," and uses their testimony to demonstrate that despite the job description, janitors take social interaction to be an important part of their job.

In this instance, Schwartz incorporates the expert testimony of actual janitors as a both a foil and a support. The testimony shows that in fact janitorial work does include interaction with other people, thus foiling the initial presentation of janitorial work as solitary. In addition, Schwartz uses the testimony of these experts to show that they embody the characteristics of wisdom that Schwartz will describe in the remainder of the speech.



TERM TO KNOW

TED

Technology Entertainment Design, a series of global conferences.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that expert testimony should be incorporated into **the body of your speech** to support, defend, or explain a main point or subpoint. Limiting your main points, subpoints, and support points to three or four points each improves the ability of your speech to resonate with the audience.

You also looked at an **example of incorporating expert testimony**. Noticing how professionals use

the testimony of experts can provide creative examples for how to incorporate expert testimony into your own speech.

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TERMS TO KNOW

Expert

A person with extensive knowledge or ability in a given subject.

TED

Technology Entertainment Design, a series of global conferences.