

The Role of the Introduction

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn about why it's important to have a strong introduction to your speech. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Role of the Introduction
2. The Road Map
3. Writing the Introduction

1. Role of the Introduction

The **introduction** is the best opportunity to convince your audience that you have something worthwhile to say.

An introduction can accomplish this by fulfilling five important responsibilities:

- Get the audience's attention
- Introduce the topic
- Explain its relevance to the audience
- State a thesis or purpose
- Outline the main points

By the end of the introduction, the audience should know where you're headed and what your speech will cover. If you are giving a persuasive speech, state your thesis in the introduction. If you are giving an informative speech, explain what you will be teaching the audience.

As you write your introduction, try to answer these questions:

- What is the scope of your presentation— how narrow or broad is your topic?
- How does it relate to the audience?
- What is at stake for the audience?
- Do you have any new insights or special perspectives to add to the existing discussion of your topic?
- Why should the audience listen to you instead of someone else?
- Will you be informing the audience, or making an argument?



Introduction

A means of presenting one person to another.

2. The Road Map

By the end of the introduction, you should provide a brief overview of your main points. This "road map" will help the audience understand the main points in the context of your larger purpose.

Without a good map to follow, the audience is liable to get lost along the way. A good introduction is the best way to make sure your message gets through.

In sum, the introduction should:

- Hook the audience
- Describe your topic
- Explain how your topic is relevant to the audience
- Explain the stakes at hand
- Establish credibility: What authority do you have to discuss this topic?
- State your innovation: What is new or special about your perspective?
- Lay out a road map of your speech
- Outline your main points
- State your thesis or purpose

3. Writing the Introduction

If you have an anecdote, quote, question, or some other "hook" that inspires you to start writing the introduction, go for it.

Don't take inspiration for granted! In some cases, the right story will set up a natural sequence for your main points, launching the speech effortlessly.

Otherwise, it may be easier to begin the introduction after you write about your main points. Working through the main points will set the destination of the speech, and it doesn't hurt to have a clear idea of where you're going before you set out.

If you finish writing the body of your speech and come back to the introduction uninspired, refer to the chapter "Getting Attention and Interest" for more ideas about effective openings.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that the **role of the introduction** is to function as a sales pitch and a useful outline in one. Therefore, it should maintain a good balance of hype and content. The introduction

has five important responsibilities: get the audience's attention, introduce the topic, explain its relevance to the audience, state a thesis or purpose, and outline the main points. By the end of the introduction, you should provide a **road map** that outlines your main points. Sometimes you may find it easier to **write the introduction** after you have written about your main points.

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TERMS TO KNOW

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