Chapter 12

Outlining

The Fun of Outlining

Think of an outline as a skeleton you must assemble bone by bone, gradually making it take form into a coherent whole. Or think of it as a puzzle in which you must put all the pieces in their correct places in order to see the full picture. Or think of it as a game of solitaire in which the right cards must follow a legitimate sequence in order for you to win. The more fully you can come to understand the outline as both rule-bound and creative, the more fully you will experience its usefulness and its power to deliver your message in a unified, coherent way.

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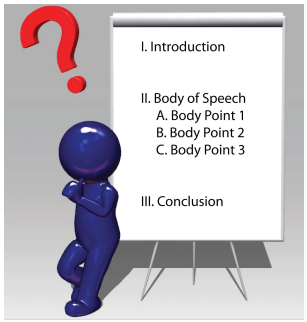
This means, of course, that there are no shortcuts, but there are helpful strategies. If you leave a bone out of a skeleton, something will fall apart. By the same token, if you omit a step in reasoning, your speech will be vulnerable to lapses in logic, lapses in the evidence you need to make your case, and the risk of becoming a disjointed, disorienting message. When you are talking informally with friends, your conversation might follow a haphazard course, but a public speech must not do so. Even in conversations with your friends, you might believe they understand what you mean, but they might not. In a prepared speech, you must be attentive to reasoning in logical steps so that your audience understands the meaning you intend to convey. This is where your outline can help you.

12.1 Why Outline?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Outlines help maintain the speech's focus on the thesis by allowing the speaker to test the scope of content, assess logical relationships between ideas, and evaluate the relevance of supporting ideas.
2. Outlines help organize a message that the audience can understand by visually showing the balance and proportion of a speech.
3. Outlines can help you deliver clear meanings by serving as the foundation for speaking notes you will use during your presentation.



In order for your speech to be as effective as possible, it needs to be organized into logical patterns. Information will need to be presented in a way your audience can understand. This is especially true if you already know a great deal about your topic. You will need to take careful steps to include pertinent information your audience might not know and to explain relationships that might not be evident to them. Using a standard outline format, you can make decisions about your main points, the specific information you will use to support those points, and the language you will use. Without an outline, your message is liable to lose **logical integrity**[1]. It might even deteriorate into a list of bullet points with no apparent connection to each other except the topic, leaving your audience relieved when your speech is finally over.

A full-sentence outline lays a strong foundation for your message. It will call on you to have one clear and **specific purpose**[2] for your message. As we have seen in other chapters of this book, writing your specific purpose in clear language serves you well. It helps you frame a clear, concrete thesis statement. It helps you exclude irrelevant information. It helps you focus only on information that directly bears on your thesis. It reduces the amount of research you must do. It suggests what kind of supporting evidence is needed, so less effort is expended in trying to figure out what to do next. It helps both you and your audience remember the central message of your speech.

Finally, a solid full-sentence outline helps your audience understand your message because they will be able to follow your reasoning. Remember that live audiences

1. A characteristic of reasoning in which each claim is carefully supported by an orderly sequence of the right kind of evidence and by the right amount of evidence.

2. A concrete, narrow purpose. For instance, a general purpose might be to inform the audience about airport security in general. The specific purpose might be to explain the specific reasons for the watch list.

for oral communications lack the ability to "rewind" your message to figure out what you said, so it is critically important to help the audience follow your reasoning as it reaches their ears.

Your authors have noted among their past and present students a reluctance to write full-sentence outlines. It's a task too often perceived as busywork, unnecessary, time consuming, and restricted. On one hand, we understand that reluctance. But on the other hand, we find that students who carefully write a full-sentence outline show a stronger tendency to give powerful presentations of excellent messages.

Tests Scope of Content

When you begin with a clear, concrete thesis statement, it acts as kind of a compass for your outline. Each of the main points should directly **explicate**[3] the **thesis statement**[4]. The test of the scope will be a comparison of each main point to the thesis statement. If you find a poor match, you will know you've wandered outside the scope of the thesis.

Let's say the general purpose of your speech is to inform, and your broad topic area is wind-generated energy. Now you must narrow this to a specific purpose. You have many choices, but let's say your specific purpose is to inform a group of property owners about the economics of wind farms where electrical energy is generated.

Your first main point could be that modern windmills require a very small land base, making the cost of real estate low. This is directly related to economics. All you need is information to support your **claim**[5] that only a small land base is needed.

In your second main point, you might be tempted to claim that windmills don't pollute in the ways other sources do. However, you will quickly note that this claim is unrelated to the thesis. You must resist the temptation to add it. Perhaps in another speech, your thesis will address environmental impact, but in this speech, you must stay within the economic scope. Perhaps you will say that once windmills are in place, they require virtually no maintenance. This claim is related to the thesis. Now all you need is supporting information to support this second claim.

Your third point, the point some audience members will want to hear, is the cost for generating electrical energy with windmills compared with other sources. This is

3. To provide a detailed explanation.
4. A short, declarative sentence that states the purpose, intent, or main idea.
5. A statement that warrants the support of facts from authoritative sources.

clearly within the scope of energy economics. You should have no difficulty finding **authoritative sources**[6] of information to support that claim.

When you write in outline form, it is much easier to test the scope of your content because you can visually locate specific information very easily and then check it against your thesis statement.

Tests Logical Relation of Parts

You have many choices for your topic, and therefore, there are many ways your content can be logically organized. In the example above, we simply listed three main points that were important economic considerations about wind farms. Often the main points of a speech can be arranged into a logical pattern; let's take a look at some such patterns.

A chronological pattern arranges main ideas in the order events occur. In some instances, reverse order might make sense. For instance, if your topic is archaeology, you might use the reverse order, describing the newest artifacts first.

A cause-and-effect pattern calls on you to describe a specific situation and explain what the effect is. However, most effects have more than one cause. Even dental cavities have multiple causes: genetics, poor nutrition, teeth too tightly spaced, sugar, ineffective brushing, and so on. If you choose a cause-and-effect pattern, make sure you have enough reliable support to do the topic justice.

A biographical pattern is usually chronological. In describing the events of an individual's life, you will want to choose the three most significant events. Otherwise, the speech will end up as a very lengthy and often pointless time line or bullet point list. For example, Mark Twain had several clear phases in his life. They include his life as a Mississippi riverboat captain, his success as a world-renowned writer and speaker, and his family life. A simple time line would present great difficulty in highlighting the relationships between important events. An outline, however, would help you emphasize the key events that contributed to Mark Twain's extraordinary life.

Although a comparison-contrast pattern appears to dictate just two main points, McCroskey, Wrench, and Richmond explain how a comparison-and-contrast can be structured as a speech with three main points. They say that "you can easily create a third point by giving basic information about what is being compared and what is being contrasted. For example, if you are giving a speech about two different medications, you could start by discussing what the medications' basic purposes

6. Sources that use factually verifiable observations and data to provide rigorous conclusions that will not collapse under scrutiny.

are. Then you could talk about the similarities, and then the differences, between the two medications."McCroskey, J. C., Wrench, J. S., & Richmond, V. P., (2003). *Principles of public speaking*. Indianapolis, IN: The College Network.

Whatever logical pattern you use, if you examine your thesis statement and then look at the three main points in your outline, you should easily be able to see the logical way in which they relate.

Tests Relevance of Supporting Ideas

When you create an outline, you can clearly see that you need supporting **evidence**[7] for each of your main points. For instance, using the example above, your first main point claims that less land is needed for windmills than for other utilities. Your supporting evidence should be about the amount of acreage required for a windmill and the amount of acreage required for other energy generation sites, such as nuclear power plants or hydroelectric generators. Your sources should come from experts in economics, economic development, or engineering. The evidence might even be expert opinion but not the opinions of ordinary people. The expert opinion will provide stronger support for your point.

Similarly, your second point claims that once a wind turbine is in place, there is virtually no maintenance cost. Your supporting evidence should show how much annual maintenance for a windmill costs and what the costs are for other energy plants. If you used a comparison with nuclear plants to support your first main point, you should do so again for the sake of consistency. It becomes very clear, then, that the third main point about the amount of electricity and its profitability needs authoritative references to compare it to the profit from energy generated at a nuclear power plant. In this third main point, you should make use of just a few well-selected statistics from authoritative sources to show the effectiveness of wind farms compared to the other energy sources you've cited.

Where do you find the kind of information you would need to support these main points? A reference librarian can quickly guide you to authoritative statistics manuals and help you make use of them.

An important step you will notice is that the full-sentence outline includes its authoritative sources within the text. This is a major departure from the way you've learned to write a research paper. In the research paper, you can add that information to the end of a sentence, leaving the reader to turn to the last page for a fuller citation. In a speech, however, your listeners can't do that. From the beginning of the supporting point, you need to fully cite your source so your audience can assess its importance.

7. Information from an expert source, which is relevant to a main point.

Because this is such a profound change from the academic habits that you're probably used to, you will have to make a concerted effort to overcome the habits of the past and provide the information your listeners need when they need it.

Test the Balance and Proportion of the Speech

Part of the value of writing a full-sentence outline is the visual space you use for each of your main points. Is each main point of approximately the same importance? Does each main point have the same number of supporting points? If you find that one of your main points has eight supporting points while the others only have three each, you have two choices: either choose the best three from the eight supporting points or strengthen the authoritative support for your other two main points.

Remember that you should use the best supporting evidence you can find even if it means investing more time in your search for knowledge.

Serves as Notes during the Speech

Although we recommend writing a full-sentence outline during the speech preparation phase, you should also create a shortened outline that you can use as notes allowing for a strong delivery. If you were to use the full-sentence outline when delivering your speech, you would do a great deal of reading, which would limit your ability to give eye contact and use gestures, hurting your connection with your audience. For this reason, we recommend writing a short-phrase outline on 4 × 6 notecards to use when you deliver your speech. The good news is that your three main points suggest how you should prepare your notecards.

Your first 4 × 6 notecard can contain your thesis statement and other key words and phrases that will help you present your introduction. Your second card can contain your first main point, together with key words and phrases to act as a map to follow as you present. If your first main point has an exact quotation you plan to present, you can include that on your card. Your third notecard should be related to your second main point, your fourth card should be about your third main point, and your fifth card should be related to your conclusion. In this way, your five notecards follow the very same organizational pattern as your full outline. In the next section, we will explore more fully how to create a speaking outline.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Your outline can help you stay focused on the thesis of your presentation as you prepare your presentation by testing the scope of your content, examining logical relationships between topics, and checking the relevance of supporting ideas.
- Your outline can help you organize your message by making sure that all of your main points are well developed.
- Your outline can help you stay focused during your presentation by forming the foundation for your speaking outline, which lets you connect to your audience and be clear in the message you're presenting.

EXERCISES

1. In one sentence, write a clear, compelling thesis statement about each of the following topics: the effects of schoolyard bullying, the impact of alcohol on brain development, and the impact of the most recent volcano eruption in Iceland. Fully cite the sources where you verify that your thesis statements are actually true.
2. Prepare a full-sentence outline for your next speech assignment. Trade outlines with a classmate and check through the outline for logical sequence of ideas, presence of credible support, proper citation, and clear organization. Give feedback to your partner on areas where he or she has done well and where the outline might be improved.
3. Transfer information from your speech outline to notecards using the guidelines described above. Practice delivering your speech for a small audience (e.g., family member, group of friends or classmates) using first the outline and then the notecards. Ask the audience for feedback comparing your delivery using the two formats.

12.2 Types of Outlines

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Define three types of outlines: working outline, full-sentence outline, and speaking outline.
2. Identify the advantages of using notecards to present your speaking outline.

When we discuss outlining, we are actually focusing on a series of outlines instead of a single one. Outlines are designed to evolve throughout your speech preparation process, so this section will discuss how you progress from a working outline to a full-sentence outline and, finally, a speaking outline. We will also discuss how using notecards for your speaking outline can be helpful to you as a speaker.

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Working Outline

A working outline is an outline you use for developing your speech. It undergoes many changes on its way to completion. This is the outline where you lay out the basic structure of your speech. You must have a general and specific purpose; an introduction, including a grabber; and a concrete, specific thesis statement and preview. You also need three main points, a conclusion, and a list of references.

One strategy for beginning your working outline is to begin by typing in your labels for each of the elements. Later you can fill in the content.

When you look ahead to the full-sentence outline, you will notice that each of the three main points moves from the general to the particular. Specifically, each main point is a claim, followed by particular information that supports that claim so that the audience will perceive its validity. For example, for a speech about coal mining safety, your first main point might focus on the idea that coal mining is a hazardous occupation. You might begin by making a very general claim, such as “Coal mining is one of the most hazardous occupations in the United States,” and then become more specific by providing statistics, authoritative quotations, or examples to support your primary claim.

A working outline allows you to work out the kinks in your message. For instance, let's say you've made the claim that coal mining is a hazardous occupation but you cannot find authoritative evidence as support. Now you must reexamine that main point to assess its validity. You might have to change that main point in order to be able to support it. If you do so, however, you must make sure the new main point is a logical part of the thesis statement–three main points–conclusion sequence.

The working outline shouldn't be thought of a "rough copy," but as a careful step in the development of your message. It will take time to develop. Here is an example of a working outline:

Name: Anomaly May McGillicuddy

Topic: Smart dust

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform a group of science students about the potential of smart dust

Main Ideas:

1. Smart dust is an assembly of microcomputers.
2. Smart dust can be used by the military—no, no—smart dust could be an enormous asset in covert military operations. (That's better because it is more clear and precise.)
3. Smart dust could also have applications to daily life.

Introduction: **(Grabber)** (fill in later)

(Thesis Statement) Thus far, researchers hypothesize that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking patients in hospitals to early warnings of natural disasters and defending against bioterrorism.

(Preview) Today, I'm going to explain what smart dust is and the various applications smart dust has in the near future. To help us understand the small of it all, we will first examine what smart dust is and how it works. We will then examine some military applications of smart dust. And we will end by discussing some nonmilitary applications of smart dust.

(Transition) (fill in later)

Main Point I: Dr. Kris Pister, a professor in the robotics lab at the University of California at Berkeley, originally conceived the idea of smart dust in 1998 as part of a project funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

(Transition) (fill in later)

Main Point II: Because smart dust was originally conceptualized under a grant from DARPA, military uses of smart dust have been widely theorized and examined.

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

(Transition) (fill in later)

Main Point III: According to the smart dust project website, smart dust could quickly become a common part of our daily lives.

1. (supporting point)
2. (supporting point)

(Transition) (fill in later)

Conclusion: (Bring your message "full circle" and create a psychologically satisfying closure.)

This stage of preparation turns out to be a good place to go back and examine whether all the main points are directly related to the thesis statement and to each other. If so, your message has a strong potential for unity of focus. But if the relationship of one of the main points is weak, this is the time to strengthen it. It will be more difficult later for two reasons: first, the sheer amount of text on your pages will make the visual task more difficult, and second, it becomes increasingly difficult to change things in which you have a large investment in time and thought.

You can see that this working outline can lay a strong foundation for the rest of your message. Its organization is visually apparent. Once you are confident in the

internal unity of your basic message, you can begin filling in the supporting points in descending detail—that is, from the general (main points) to the particular (supporting points) and then to greater detail. The outline makes it visually apparent where information fits. You only need to assess your supporting points to be sure they're authoritative and directly relevant to the main points they should support.

Sometimes transitions seem troublesome, and that's not surprising. We often omit them when we have informal conversations. Our conversation partners understand what we mean because of our gestures and vocal strategies. However, others might not understand what we mean, but think they do, and so we might never know whether they understood us. Even when we include transitions, we don't generally identify them as transitions. In a speech, however, we need to use effective transitions as a gateway from one main point to the next. The listener needs to know when a speaker is moving from one main point to the next.

In the next type of outline, the full-sentence outline, take a look at the transitions and see how they make the listener aware of the shifting focus to the next main point.

Full-Sentence Outline

Your full-sentence outline should contain full sentences only. There are several reasons why this kind of outline is important. First, you have a full plan of everything you intend to say to your audience, so that you will not have to struggle with wordings or examples. Second, you have a clear idea of how much time it will take to present your speech. Third, it contributes a fundamental ingredient of good preparation, part of your ethical responsibility to your audience. This is how a full-sentence outline looks:

Name: Anomaly May McGillicuddy

Topic: Smart dust

General Purpose: To inform

Specific Purpose: To inform a group of science students about the potential of smart dust.

Main Ideas:

1. Smart dust is an assembly of microcomputers.
2. Smart dust could be an enormous asset in covert military operations.
3. Smart dust could also have applications to daily life.

Introduction: **(Grabber)** In 2002, famed science fiction writer, Michael Crichton, released his book *Prey*, which was about a swarm of nanomachines that were feeding off living tissue. The nanomachines were solar powered, self-sufficient, and intelligent. Most disturbingly, the nanomachines could work together as a swarm as it took over and killed its prey in its need for new resources. The technology for this level of sophistication in nanotechnology is surprisingly more science fact than science fiction. In 2000, three professors of electrical engineering and computer Science at the University of California at Berkeley, Kahn, Katz, and Pister, hypothesized in the *Journal of Communications and Networks* that wireless networks of tiny microelectromechanical sensors, or MEMS; robots; or devices could detect phenomena including light, temperature, or vibration. By 2004, *Fortune Magazine* listed "smart dust" as the first in their "Top 10 Tech Trends to Bet On."

(Thesis Statement) Thus far researchers hypothesized that smart dust could be used for everything from tracking patients in hospitals to early warnings of natural disasters and as a defense against bioterrorism.

(Preview) Today, I'm going to explain what smart dust is and the various applications smart dust has in the near future. To help us understand the small of it all, we will first examine what smart dust is and how it works. We will then

examine some military applications of smart dust. And we will end by discussing some nonmilitary applications of smart dust.

(Transition) To help us understand smart dust, we will begin by first examining what smart dust is.

Main Point I: Dr. Kris Pister, a professor in the robotics lab at the University of California at Berkeley, originally conceived the idea of smart dust in 1998 as part of a project funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. According to a 2001 article written by Bret Warneke, Matt Last, Brian Liebowitz, and Kris Pister titled "Smart Dust: Communicating with a Cubic-Millimeter Computer" published in *Computer*, Pister's goal was to build a device that contained a built-in sensor, communication device, and a small computer that could be integrated into a cubic millimeter package.
2. For comparison purposes, Doug Steel, in a 2005 white paper titled "Smart Dust" written for C. T. Bauer College of Business at the University of Houston, noted that a single grain of rice has a volume of five cubic millimeters.
    1. Each individual piece of dust, called a mote, would then have the ability to interact with other motes and supercomputers.
    2. As Steve Lohr wrote in the January 30, 2010, edition of the *New York Times* in an article titled "Smart Dust? Not Quite, But We're Getting There," smart dust could eventually consist of "Tiny digital sensors, strewn around the glove, gathering all sorts of information and communicating with powerful computer networks to monitor, measure, and understand the physical world in new ways."

(Transition) Now that we've examined what smart dust is, let's switch gears and talk about some of the military applications for smart dust.

Main Point II: Because smart dust was originally conceptualized under a grant from DARPA, military uses of smart dust have been widely theorized and examined.

1. According to the smart dust website, smart dust could eventually be used for "battlefield surveillance, treaty monitoring, transportation monitoring, scud hunting" and other clear military applications.
    1. Probably the number one benefit of smart dust in the military environment is its surveillance abilities.
        1. Major Scott Dickson, in a Blue Horizons paper written for the US Air Force Center for Strategy and Technology's Air War College, sees smart dust as helping the military in battlespace awareness, homeland security, and weapons of mass destruction (WMD) identification.
        2. Furthermore, Major Dickson also believes it may be possible to create smart dust that has the ability to defeat communications jamming equipment created by foreign governments, which could help the US military not only communicate among itself, but could also increase communications with civilians in military combat zones.
2. According to a 2010 article written by Jessica Griggs in new *Scientist*, one of the first benefits of smart dust could be an early defense warning for space storms and other debris that could be catastrophic.

(Transition) Now that we've explored some of the military benefits of smart dust, let's switch gears and see how smart dust may be able to have an impact on our daily lives.

Main Point III: According to the smart dust project website, smart dust could quickly become a common part of our daily lives.

1. Everything from pasting smart dust particles to our finger tips to create a virtual computer keyboard to inventory control to product quality control have been discussed as possible applications for smart dust.
    1. Steve Lohr, in his 2010 *New York Times* article, wrote, "The applications for sensor-based computing, experts say, include buildings that manage their own energy use, bridges that

sense motion and metal fatigue to tell engineers they need repairs, cars that track traffic patterns and report potholes, and fruit and vegetable shipments that tell grocers when they ripen and begin to spoil."

2. Medically, according to the smart dust website, smart dust could help disabled individuals interface with computers.
    1. Theoretically, we could all be injected with smart dust, which relays information to our physicians and detects adverse changes to our body instantly.
    2. Smart dust could detect the microscopic formations of center cells or alert us when we've been infected by a bacterium or virus, which could speed up treatment and prolong all of our lives.

(Transition) Today, we've explored what smart dust is, how smart dust could be utilized by the US military, and how smart dust could impact all of our lives in the near future.

Conclusion: While smart dust is quickly transferring from science fiction to science fact, experts agree that the full potential of smart dust will probably not occur until 2025. Smart dust is definitely in our near future, but swarms of smart dust eating people as was depicted in Michael Crichton's 2002 novel, *Prey*, isn't reality. However, as with any technological advance, there are definite ethical considerations and worries related to smart dust. Even Dr. Kris Pister's smart dust project website admits that as smart dust becomes more readily available, one of the trade-offs will be privacy. Pister responds to these critiques by saying, "As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effect. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were greater than or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn't be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far outweigh the risks to personal privacy."

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When you prepare your full-sentence outline carefully, it may take as much as 1 ½ hours to complete the first part of the outline from your name at the top through the introduction. When you've completed that part, take a break and do something else. When you return to the outline, you should be able to complete your draft in another 1 ½ hours. After that, you only need to do a detailed check for completeness, accuracy, relevance, balance, omitted words, and consistency. If you find errors, instead of being frustrated, be glad you can catch these errors *before* you're standing up in front of your audience.

You will notice that the various parts of your speech, for instance, the transition and main points, are labeled. There are compelling reasons for these labels. First, as you develop your message, you will sometimes find it necessary to go back and look at your wording in another part of the outline. Your labels help you find particular passages easily. Second, the labels work as a checklist so that you can make sure you've included everything you intended to. Third, it helps you prepare your speaking outline.

You'll also notice the full references at the end of the outline. They match the citations within the outline. Sometimes while preparing a speech, a speaker finds it important to go back to an original source to be sure the message will be accurate. If you type in your references as you develop your speech rather than afterward, they will be a convenience to you if they are complete and accurate.

Don't think of the references as busywork or drudgery. Although they're more time consuming than text, they are good practice for the more advanced academic work you will do in the immediate future.

Speaking Outline

Your full-sentence outline prepares you to present a clear and well-organized message, but your speaking outline will include far less detail. Whenever possible, you will use key words and phrases, but in some instances, an extended quotation will need to be fully written on your speaking outline.

Resist the temptation to use your full-sentence outline as your speaking outline. The temptation is real for at least two reasons. First, once you feel that you've carefully crafted every sequence of words in your speech, you might not want to sacrifice quality when you shift to vocal presentation. Second, if you feel anxiety about how well you will do in front of an audience, you may want to use your full-sentence outline as a "safety net." In our experience, however, if you have your full-sentence outline with you, you will end up reading, rather than speaking, to your audience. The subject of reading to your audience will be taken up in Chapter 14 "Delivering the Speech" on speech delivery. For now, it is enough to know you shouldn't read, but instead, use carefully prepared notecards.

Your speech has five main components: introduction, main point one, main point two, main point three, and the conclusion. Therefore we strongly recommend the use of five notecards: one for each of those five components. There are extenuating circumstances that might call for additional cards, but begin with five cards only.

How will five notecards suffice in helping you produce a complete, rich delivery? Why can't you use the full-sentence outline you labored so hard to write? First, the presence of your full-sentence outline will make it appear that you don't know the content of your speech. Second, the temptation to read the speech directly from the full-sentence outline is nearly overwhelming; even if you resist this temptation, you will find yourself struggling to remember the words on the page rather than speaking extemporaneously. Third, sheets of paper are noisier and more awkward than cards. Fourth, it's easier to lose your place using the full outline. Finally, cards just look better. Carefully prepared cards, together with practice, will help you more than you might think.

Plan to use five cards. Use 4 × 6 cards. The smaller 3 × 5 cards are too small to provide space for a visually organized set of notes. With five cards, you will have one card for the introduction, one card for each of the three main points, and one card for the conclusion. You should number your cards and write on one side only. Numbering is helpful if you happen to drop your cards, and writing on only one side means that the audience is not distracted by your handwritten notes and reminders to yourself while you are speaking. Each card should contain key words and key phrases but not full sentences.

Some speeches will include direct or extended quotations from expert sources. Some of these quotations might be highly technical or difficult to memorize for other reasons, but they must be presented correctly. This is a circumstance in which you could include an extra card in the sequence of notecards. This is the one time you may read fully from a card. If your quotation is important and the exact wording is crucial, your audience will understand that.

How will notecards be sufficient? When they are carefully written, your practice will reveal that they will work. If, during practice, you find that one of your cards doesn't work well enough, you can rewrite that card.

Using a set of carefully prepared, sparingly worded cards will help you resist the temptation to rely on overhead transparencies or PowerPoint slides to get you through the presentation. Although they will never provide the exact word sequence of your full-sentence outline, they should keep you organized during the speech.

The "trick" to selecting the phrases and quotations for your cards is to identify the labels that will trigger a recall sequence. For instance, if the phrase "more science fact" brings to mind the connection to science fiction and the differences between the real developments and the fictive events of Crichton's novel *Prey*, that phrase on your card will support you through a fairly extended part of your introduction.

You must discover what works for you and then select those words that tend to jog your recall. Having identified what works, make a preliminary set of no more than five cards written on one side only, and practice with them. Revise and refine them as you would an outline.

The following is a hypothetical set of cards for the smart dust speech:

Card 1.

Introduction: 2002, *Prey*, swarm nanomachines feed on living tissue.

Kahn, Katz, and Pister, U C Berkeley engineering and computer sci. profs. hyp.

Microelectromechanical (MEMS) devices could detect light, temp, or vib.

Thesis Statement: Researchers hyp that s.d. could track patients, warn of natural disaster, act as defense against bioterrorism.

Prev.: What smart dust is and how it works, military aps, nonmilitary aps.

Transition: To help understand, first, what smart dust is.

Card 2.

I. Dr. Kris Pister, prof robotics lab UC Berkeley conceived the idea in 1998 in a proj. Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).

1. 2001 article by Bret Warneke et al titled “Smart Dust: Communicating with a Cubic-Millimeter Computer” publ. in *Computer*, Pister wanted sensors, comm. devices, and computer in a cubic millimeter package.
2. Doug Steel of CT Bauer College of Bus at Houston noted grain of rice = 5 cm.
    1. Each mote could interact w/ others.
    2. (see extended quotation, next card)

Card 3.

Quotation: Steve Lohr, NYT Jan 30 2005, "Smart Dust? Not Quite, but We're Getting There." Smart dust could eventually consist of "Tiny digital sensors, strewn around the globe, gathering all sorts of information and communicating with powerful computer networks to monitor, measure, and understand the physical world in new ways."

Card 4.

II. Orig conceptualized under DARPA, military uses theor. and examined.

1. Smart Dust website, battlefield surveill., treaty monitor., transp. monitor., + scud hunting.
    1. benefit, surveill.
        1. Maj. Scott Dickson, Blue Horizons Paper for Ctr for Strat and Tech for USAF air war college, sees s.d. as help for battlespace awareness, homeland security, and WMD ID.
        2. could also defeat comm. jamming equipt by communicating among itself and w/ civilians in combat zones.
2. 2010 article Jessica Griggs *New Scientist*, early defense, storms and debris.

Transition: Switch gears to daily lives.

Card 5.

III. s.d. project website: s.d. could become common in daily life.

1. Pasting particles for virtual computer keyboard to inventory control poss.
    1. Steve Lohr, 2010, NYT, “The applications for sensor-based computing, experts say, include buildings that manage their own energy use, bridges that sense motion and metal fatigue to tell engineers they need repairs, cars that track traffic patterns and report potholes, and fruit and vegetable shipments that tell grocers when they ripen and begin to spoil.”
2. Medically, accdng to SD project website, help disabled.
    1. interface w/ computers
    2. injected, cd. relay info to docs and detect body changes instantly
        1. cancer cells, bacteria or virus, speed up treatment, and so on.

Transition: We expl. What SD is, how SD cd be used military, and how SD cd impact our lives.

Card 6.

Conclusion: Transf fiction to fact, experts agree potential 2025. Michael Crichton's Prey isn't reality, but in developing SD as fact, there are ethical considerations. Pister: privacy.

Dr. Kris Pister: "As an engineer, or a scientist, or a hair stylist, everyone needs to evaluate what they do in terms of its positive and negative effect. If I thought that the negatives of working on this project were larger or even comparable to the positives, I wouldn't be working on it. As it turns out, I think that the potential benefits of this technology far far outweigh the risks to personal privacy."

Using a set of cards similar to this could help you get through an impressive set of specialized information. But what if you lose your place during a speech? With a set of cards, it will take less time to refind it than with a full-sentence outline. You will not be rustling sheets of paper, and because your cards are written on one side only, you can keep them in order without flipping them back and forth to check both sides.

What if you go blank? Take a few seconds to recall what you've said and how it leads to your next points. There may be several seconds of silence in the middle of your speech, and it may seem like minutes to you, but you can regain your footing most easily with a small set of well-prepared cards.

Under no circumstances should you ever attempt to put your entire speech on cards in little tiny writing. You will end up reading a sequence of words to your audience instead of telling them your message.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Working outlines help you with speech logic, development, and planning.
- The full-sentence outline develops the full detail of the message.
- The speaking outline helps you stay organized in front of the audience without reading to them.
- Using notecards for your speaking outline helps with delivery and makes it easier to find information if you lose your place or draw a blank.

EXERCISES

1. With respect to your speech topic, what words need to be defined?
2. Define what you mean by the terms you will use.
3. How does your definition compare with those of experts?

12.3 Using Outlining for Success

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. Understand five basic principles of outline creation.

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As with any part of the speech process, there are some pretty commonly agreed upon principles for creating an outline. Now that we've examined the basics of outline creation, there are some important factors to consider when creating a logical and coherent outline: singularity, consistency, adequacy, uniformity, and parallelism.

Singularity

For the sake of clarity, make sure your thesis statement expresses one idea only. Only in this way will it be optimally useful to you as you build your outline. If you have narrowed your topic skillfully, you can readily focus the thesis statement as one central point. For instance, if you have a thesis statement that says the Second Amendment protects gun ownership rights but most people are unaware of the responsibility involved, you have a thesis statement focusing on two different issues. Which focus will you follow? It's crucial to choose just one, saving the other perhaps for a different speech.

The same holds true for your three main points: they should each express one clear idea. For the sake of your audience, maintain clarity. If many different ideas are required in order to build a complete message, you can handle them in separate sentences with the use of such transitions as "at the same time," "alternately," "in response to that event," or some other transition that clarifies the relationship between two separate ideas.

Consistency

The entire point of framing a thesis with one clear focus is to help you maintain consistency throughout your speech. Beyond the grammatical requirements of subject-verb agreement, you will want to maintain a consistent approach. For

instance, unless your speech has a chronological structure that begins in the past and ends in the future, you should choose a tense, past or present, to use throughout the speech. Similarly, you should choose language and use it consistently. For instance, use humanity instead of mankind or humans, and use that term throughout.

Similarly, define your terms and use those terms only to designate the meanings in your definition. To do otherwise could result in equivocation and confusion. For instance, if you use the word "right" in two or three different senses, you should change your language. The word "right" can be applicable to your *right* to a good education; the ethical difference between *right* and wrong; and the status of a statement as *right*, or accurate and correct. By the same token, in a health care setting, saying that a medical test had a positive outcome can be confusing. Does the patient test positive for the presence of disease, or does the test reveal some good news? If you find yourself using the same word to mean different things, you will need to spend extra time in your speech explaining these meanings very clearly—or avoid the problem by making other word choices.

Adequacy

To make sure your audience will understand your speech, you must set aside the assumption that what is obvious to you is also obvious to your audience. Therefore, pay attention to adequacy in two ways: definitions of terms and support for your main points.

You should use concrete language as much as you can. For instance, if you use the word "community," you're using an abstract term that can mean many things. You might be referring to a suburban neighborhood; to a cultural group, such as the Jewish community; to an institutional setting that includes an academic community; or to a general sense of overarching mainstream community standards for what materials should or should not be broadcast on television, for instance. You may not find any definition of "community" that conveys your meaning. Therefore, you will need to define for your audience what *you* mean by "community."

Adequacy is also a concern when you use evidence to support your main points. Evidence of the right kind and the right weight are needed. For instance, if you make a substantial claim, such as a claim that all printed news sources will be obsolete within ten years, you need expert sources. This means you need at least two well-known experts from the institutions that provide news (newspapers, television news, or news radio). They should be credible sources, not sources with

extreme views whose contact with reality is questioned. This will give you the right kind of evidence, and a large enough amount of evidence.

Uniformity

A full-sentence outline readily shows whether you are giving "equal time" to each of your three main points. For example, are you providing three pieces of evidence to support each main point? It should also show whether each main point is directly related to the thesis statement.

Parallelism

Parallelism refers to the idea that the three main points follow the same structure or make use of the same kind of language. For instance, in the sample outline we used previously, you see that each of the main points emphasizes the topic, smart dust.

Parallelism also allows you to check for inconsistencies and self-contradictory statements. For instance, does anything within main point two contradict anything in main point one? Examining your text for this purpose can strengthen the clarity of your message. For instance, if in main point one you claim that computer crime leaves an electronic trail, but in main point two you claim that hackers often get away with their crimes, you have some explaining to do. If an electronic trail can readily lead to the discovery of the electronic felon, how or why do they get away with it? The answer might be that cybercrime does not fall within the jurisdiction of any law enforcement agency or that the law lags behind technology. Perhaps there are other reasons as well, and you must make sure you don't leave your audience confused. If you confuse them, you will sound confused, and you will lose credibility. There is no doubt that a full-sentence outline provides the most useful opportunity to examine your message for the details that either clarify or undermine your message.

Finally, your conclusion should do two things. First, it should come "full circle" in order to show the audience that you have covered all the territory you laid out in your preview. Second, it should provide satisfying, decisive, psychological closure. In other words, your audience should know when your speech is over. You should not trail off. You should not have to say, "That's it." Your audience should not have to wait to see whether you're going to say anything else. At the right time, they should feel certain that the speech is over and that they can clap.

KEY TAKEAWAY

- For an outline to be useful, it's important to follow five basic principles: singularity, consistency, adequacy, uniformity, and parallelism.

EXERCISES

1. Look at an outline you've created for your public speaking course. Did you follow the five basic rules of outlining? How could you have changed your outline to follow those five basic principles?
2. Write an outline for your next speech in your course, paying special attention to the structure of the outline to ensure that none of the principles of outlining are violated.

12.4 Chapter Exercises

SPEAKING ETHICALLY

George needs to turn in an outline for the speech he is assigned to deliver. The speech itself is two weeks away, but the outline is due today. George has already written the entire speech, and he does not see why he should spend time deleting parts of it to transform it into an outline. He knows exactly what he's going to say when he gives the speech. Then he discovers that the word-processing program in his computer can create an outline version of a document. Aha! Technology to the rescue! George happily turns in the computer-generated outline, feeling confident that never again will he have to hassle with writing an outline himself.

1. Do you think George's use of a computer-generated outline fulfills the purpose of creating an outline for a speech? Why or why not?
2. Do you think George's professor will be able to tell that the outline was created by a word-processing program?

END-OF-CHAPTER ASSESSMENT

1. Joe is beginning to prepare his speech and has constructed a brief outline that sketches out his thesis and main points but does not yet have a fully developed conclusion or transitions. Which type of outline has Joe constructed?

    a. speaking outline
    b. full-sentence outline
    c. opening outline
    d. working outline
    e. transitory outline

2. Brenda has prepared her speaking outline on a set of six notecards, so she believes she is finished preparing for her speech. You tell her that simply preparing the speaking outline is not enough; she needs to practice using her notecards as well. Why is this the case?

    a. She should get used to how the notecards feel in her hand.
    b. She needs to make sure the information on the cards will work as a memory cue for her.
    c. She needs to know whether her audience prefers white or colored notecards.
    d. You think she needs to add more notecards.
    e. She needs to memorize all the quotations she is using.

ANSWER KEY

1. d
2. b