

1. What is meant by 'structure'?

a. The structure of a speech

- Simple rule to follow: when preparing and making any speech, **say what we are going to say, say it, and then say what we have said**
 - Speech should not be repetitive, or keep going over same ground
 - **But** there should be a clear introduction, body, and conclusion
- Purpose of the introduction
 - To declare position or policy, **and** state reasons why position should be adopted, or how 'model' (the policy) might be implemented
 - Should provide a brief outline, with headings (and sub-headings) showing precisely
 - **Where the argument starts**
 - **How each stage of the argument is built**
 - **Conclusion we hope to achieve**
 - Also a good idea, in competitive debating, to introduce metric by which debate should be judged
- Should not be tempted to launch straight into the arguments themselves
 - Audience more able and more willing to follow if they have some idea of the final destination
 - Allows them to put arguments into context, to evaluate the strength of those arguments
 - Possible to highlight, or 'flag up' the examples used to illustrate our points (but not necessary)
- Body of the speech is most important part
 - Should take the majority of allotted time
 - Should decide on the order of the individual points or arguments to make **based on relevance and importance in supporting overall position**
 - Should make sure that each separate point is made clearly and distinctly

- Conclusion of the speech **should not be a repetition of the arguments as presented**
 - Risk boring the audience and creating impression that we have run out of things to say
 - Conclusion should *represent* arguments and examples or data, showing clearly why each leads to, or supports demand made
 - 'Demand' is to take particular course of action, or just to accept point of view
 - Can again demonstrate the logic of argument
 - Opportunity for effective rhetoric (soundbites) to reinforce argument in audience's mind
- Structuring and presenting speech in this way ensures audience is given clear framework and context
 - Can evaluate the quality of each argument
 - Have opportunity to follow closely each step in the argumentation
 - Allowed a chance to consider the overall impact

b. The structure of an argument

- Structure of each (individual) argument also follows introduction-body-conclusion
 - May be broken down further to ensure that each point is complete and distinct in itself and **also linked expressly to subsequent points and to overall theme of the speech**
- Individual argument structure can also help to make arguments more persuasive
 - Recognise natural biases active in all humans when presented with information
 - No one single way of presenting an argument that is always more effective, or more convincing for all people
 - Depending on what argument is made, and what hoped-for outcome is, numerous options exist
- **Telling a story** - often a good way of gaining and holding people's attention initially
 - ***Narrative bias***, which means that we process information presented in narrative form more readily

- As more individual detail is provided, scenario appears more likely
 - Also more likely to retain that information, storing it in more accessible memory
 - Due in part to the **humanisation effect** that the narrative creates, coupled with **experiential** and **corroborative bias** (more below)
- *Just* telling a story is not enough
 - No way of knowing audience knows or can see argument or any relevance to story
 - Next step is to explain relevance, to provide moral of story
 - Need to highlight issues, motives and actions in story
 - Show how these hold true in vast majority of cases
 - Must be clear about steps of logic being made
 - Need to be sure that steps are simple and clear, not blind leaps of faith
 - Need to talk about implications: of individual point for overall argument, and for wider issues
 - In any debate, often several arguments that can be brought
 - Important to ensure that we say exactly why this one needs to be prioritised and dealt with
 - Implications are also negative
 - Should consider, and demonstrate the net deficit in ignoring a particular strand of argument
 - Show why cost of ignoring it will be far greater than if other considerations forgotten
 - Should remember that time and circumstance often do not allow for all arguments to be developed completely
 - Arguments should never be dismissed out of hand, but where one or two only are possible, concentrate on making strongest
 - Feeds *negative bias*

- Need to finish point
 - Give brief summary of what point was, and relevance and importance to overall argument
 - Can ensure have said all we want on a particular point
 - Each point remains clear and distinct but linked to next one
- Alternative structure (which does not use story element) is to consider each argument like newspaper article
 - Start with bold statement (**headline**)
 - Give explanation of what is meant (**the leader**)
 - Provide example or statistic to illustrate and support the point (**detail**)
 - Provide linking logic to show how point relates to whole
- Opening statement as headline can help focus
 - Want something short, memorable, and that will grab attention of audience - want them to sit up and take notice
 - Make sure they are paying attention when we talk through details
 - Something humorous, or famous quotation makes it all easier to remember
- Explanation of headline is main thrust of argument
 - Need to show clearly, and so that everyone can follow: what does the statement mean?
 - If talking about a particular group of people (**stakeholders**), who is affected, and how?
 - If dealing with a particular situation, what can or should be done about it?
 - Some or all of these questions need to be answered in detail
 - If people are to be convinced, also need to answer *why*:
 - Why these people are most important to consider (the **primary** stakeholders)
 - Why this is a problem that can and should be addressed

- Why this is (morally) the right thing to do
- Often, arguing from a purely theoretical standpoint misses something
 - *Might* be able to show strong arguments why something should or should not be done
 - **But** providing example of where something similar was tried in the past (showing consequences positive or negative) **and** demonstrating that similar action will also have similar consequences is more effective
 - Must be able to show that a significant number of factors are the same or similar
 - More factors in common = more logical conclusion that outcome will be same or similar
 - Examples often in form of statistics (more below)
- Finally: need to finish point in same way as before
 - Need to ensure we have said all we want, before moving on
 - Can also check audience has grasped point fully, and no further clarification is necessary
- Must remember: whichever way we choose to structure points, they must link **one to the other**.
 - Should be a logical progression or flow to arguments
 - When audience accepts the first point, use that in order to build, and gain acceptance of, second, and so on
 - Shows a clear thread running through each individual argument
 - Should make it easier to show that all points reinforce each other, and overall arguments

2. The importance of clear structure

a. Maps and signposts

- Setting out a clear structure does two things:
 - Shows clearly the direction of speech or argument
 - Gives audience confidence that we have thought through both argument and its implications
- Think of speech or argument as a journey
 - Need to ensure listeners' comfort at each stage of trip
 - Remember: we know where we are going. They, as yet, do not
- Laying out a map, and showing them the route, they feel more in control (even though they are not)
 - Inspires confidence – even if they are unsure as to destination, we are not
- Structure acts as series of signposts, helping audience to follow logic, sense and persuasiveness of argument
 - Highlighting of each point at start, and introducing each point clearly and distinctly, maintains confidence
 - Route sketched earlier is one being followed
 - Relaxes audience and makes them feel comfortable
 - Allows them to focus on what is being said, and to evaluate

b. Finishing the point

- Clear structure of each point tells us where to start and end
 - Can be sure all relevant information and argumentation to make the point work is included
- Will only finish the point properly when talked about all the implications of it
 - Tease out consequences that may at first seem counter-intuitive

- Re-examine the logic of the point
 - Audience can be satisfied that it is not flawed, that conclusion reached is reasonable and rational
 - Can create something of a 'nodding dog' effect
 - See the affirmation of argument in the body language of our audience
- Taking them through each stage of argument for a second time, the audience *recognises* rather than learns
 - Feeds the corroborative bias, as we think we are confirming something we already know
 - Even if conclusion may have seemed at first outlandish, can often find the response:
 - 'I had never thought of it like that, but now that you mention it...'
 - If logic and argument good, what was originally a surprising conclusion can often seem like most reasonable
- Finishing the point well also checks for any lack of understanding or confusion
 - Reiterate, and paraphrase; may encounter different responses
 - 'Oh, *that's* what was meant...'
 - 'I didn't get the first time...'
- Gives the opportunity to revisit (with audience) parts of the argument that are particularly complex
- Make sure to spend the proper time giving adequate explanation
- When point is finished properly, take time to pause, collect thoughts, before presenting the next
 - Need to provide a link between arguments
 - Show a consistent position
 - Need to ensure that arguments are not contradictory
 - Ending the point well is an indication and a reminder to do this

- Show the audience that each part of the argument has been considered, weighted, researched and prepared
- Own confidence in performance will be enhanced, as will audience's

c. Diversions

- May at times be forced to make diversions - spur-of-the moment detours to places of interest along the way
 - Come in the form of objections or counterarguments, or innocent questions from audience
 - Need to be able to cope with these without letting them distract from ultimate destination
- Knowing structure, and knowing it well, allows us to divert without difficulty
 - Know just how to get 'back on track'
 - Can overcome obstacles, find routes around objections, and deal with comments and questions
 - No fear that we will get lost and be unable to recover our original position
 - Having objections or questions listened and responded to immediately is what those asking them want
 - Being able to answer straight away means more likely to convince them with our response