



# 8

# Beginning and Ending the Speech



## The Introduction

- Get Attention and Interest
- Create a Positive Relationship with the Audience
- Establish Credibility
- Preview the Body of the Speech
- Sample Introduction with Commentary
- Tips for the Introduction

## The Conclusion

- Signal the End of the Speech
- Reinforce the Central Idea
- Sample Conclusion with Commentary
- Tips for the Conclusion





**O**n the night of October 9, 1986, a conductor at Her Majesty's Theatre in London tapped his baton, raised his arms, and signaled the orchestra to play. Moments later the public first heard the unforgettable opening chords of the hit musical *The Phantom of the Opera*.

Like most musical stage plays, *The Phantom of the Opera* begins with an overture, an introduction that captures the audience's attention and gives them a preview of the music they are going to hear. Similarly, most musicals end with a finale, when the whole cast is onstage, the plot is resolved, and the music is brought to a dramatic climax. If there were no such conclusion, if the actors just stopped and walked offstage, the audience would be left unsatisfied.

Like musical plays, speeches need appropriate beginnings and endings. The beginning, or introduction, prepares listeners for what is to come. The conclusion ties up everything and alerts listeners that the speech is going to end. Ideally, it is a satisfying conclusion.

In this chapter we explore the roles played by an introduction and a conclusion in speechmaking. We also discuss techniques aimed at fulfilling those roles. If you apply these techniques imaginatively, you will take a big step toward elevating your speeches from the ordinary to the splendid.

## The Introduction

First impressions are important. A poor beginning may so distract or alienate listeners that the speaker can never fully recover. Moreover, getting off on the right foot is vital to a speaker's self-confidence. What could be more encouraging than watching your listeners' faces begin to register interest, attention, and pleasure? A good introduction, you will find, is an excellent confidence booster.

In most speech situations, the introduction has four objectives:

- Get the attention and interest of your audience.
- Create a positive relationship with the audience.
- Establish your credibility.
- Preview the body of the speech.

We'll look at each of these objectives in turn.

### GET ATTENTION AND INTEREST

Getting the initial attention of your audience is usually easy—even before you utter a single word. After you are introduced and step to the lectern, your audience will normally give you their attention. If they don't, wait patiently. Look directly at the audience without saying a word. In a few moments all talking and physical commotion will stop. Your listeners will be attentive. You will be ready to start speaking.

Keeping the attention of your audience once you start talking is more difficult. Here are the methods used most often. Employed individually or in combination, they will help get the audience caught up in your speech.



## Relate the Topic to the Audience

People pay attention to things that affect them directly. If you can relate the topic to your listeners, they are much more likely to be interested in it.

Suppose, for example, that a speaker begins her speech like this:

Today I am going to talk about collecting postcards—a hobby that is both fascinating and financially rewarding. I would like to explain the basic kinds of collectible postcards, why they are so valuable, and how collectors buy and sell their cards.

This is certainly a clear introduction, but it is not one to get you hooked on the speech. Now what if the speaker were to begin this way:

It's Saturday morning, and you are helping clean out your grandmother's house. After working a while, you stumble upon a trunk, open it, and discover hundreds of old postcards. Thinking about getting to your driving lesson on time, you start tossing the cards into the trash can. Congratulations! You have just thrown away a year's tuition.

This time the speaker has used just the right bait. Chances are you will be hooked.

Even when you use other interest-arousing lures, you should *always* relate your topic to the audience. At times this will test your ingenuity, but it pays dividends. Here is an excellent example from a speech about dreams. The speaker began by saying:



### Video 8.1

View the beginning of  
"In Your Dreams."

You're being chased by an object of unspeakable horror, yet your legs can only move in slow motion. Each step takes unbearably long, and your frantic struggle to run faster is hopeless. Your pursuer gets closer, and your desperation turns to terror. You're completely helpless—eye to eye with death.

Then you wake up, gasping for air, your heart pounding, your face clammy with sweat. It takes a few minutes for your heart and breathing to slow down. You reassure yourself that it was "just a dream." Soon you drift back to sleep.

By using vivid language to describe something all his listeners had experienced, the speaker made sure of an attentive audience.

## State the Importance of Your Topic

Presumably, you think your speech is important. Tell your audience why they should think so too. Here is how one speaker used this method in a speech about the global economic cost of traffic jams:

Traffic jams are more than a nuisance. They are a worldwide economic problem. In Guangzhou alone, they cost 12 billion yuan each year. In major U.S. cities, they are responsible for more than 21 billion liters of wasted fuel and 68 billion dollars in lost productivity. Traffic jams will soon cost the British economy more than 20 billion pounds sterling a year.

These are striking statistics. By citing them in her introduction, the speaker emphasized the importance of her topic and captured the attention of her audience.



A good introduction will get your speech off to a strong start. To be most effective, it should relate the topic to the audience and be delivered from a minimum of notes.

### **Startle the Audience**

One surefire way to arouse interest quickly is to startle your listeners with an arresting or intriguing statement. Everyone in the audience paid close attention after this speaker's introduction:

As I speak today, the silent killer is striking somewhere in China. Controllable but incurable, the silent killer is a symptomless disease. You can have it for years and never know until it fells you. As many as 300 million Chinese have this disease, and more than half a million will die from it this year. Odds are that one in five of us in this room have it.

What is this silent killer? Not cancer. Not diabetes. Not heart disease. It is hypertension—high blood pressure.

This technique is highly effective and easy to use. Just be sure the startling introduction relates directly to the subject of your speech. If you choose a strong opening simply for its shock value and then go on to talk about something else, your audience will be confused and quite possibly annoyed.

### **Arouse the Curiosity of the Audience**

People are curious. One way to draw them into your speech is with a series of statements that progressively whet their curiosity about the subject of the speech. For example:

Every day, fierce battles take place in public parks throughout China. Generals move their soldiers against the enemy. Horses, chariots, cannons, even elephants are used in the pursuit of victory. No quarter is given when the losing general is captured.

And yet, no lives are lost. No nations are conquered. The battles are fought on chessboards, and they reflect the Chinese people's love of Xiangqi.



Notice how much less effective the introduction would have been if the speaker had simply said, “Today I am going to talk about Xiangqi.”

### Question the Audience

#### rhetoical question

A question that the  
audience answers  
mentally rather  
than out loud.

Asking a *rhetoical question* is another way to get your listeners thinking about your speech. Sometimes a single question will do:

What is your most valuable possession?

Do you know how many township enterprises are started each year in China?

In other circumstances, you may want to pose a series of questions, each of which draws the audience deeper and deeper into the speech. Here is how one speaker used this method:

Have you ever spent a sleepless night writing a report for your boss? Can you remember rushing to finish a project because you waited too long to start? Do you often feel overwhelmed by all the things you have to get done?

If so, you may be the victim of poor time management. Fortunately, there are proven strategies you can follow to use your time effectively and to keep control of your life.

Like beginning with a startling statement, opening with a question works best when the question is meaningful to the audience and firmly related to the content of the speech. It also works most effectively when you pause for just a moment after each question. This adds dramatic impact and gives the question time to sink in. The audience, of course, will answer mentally—not out loud.

### Begin with a Quotation

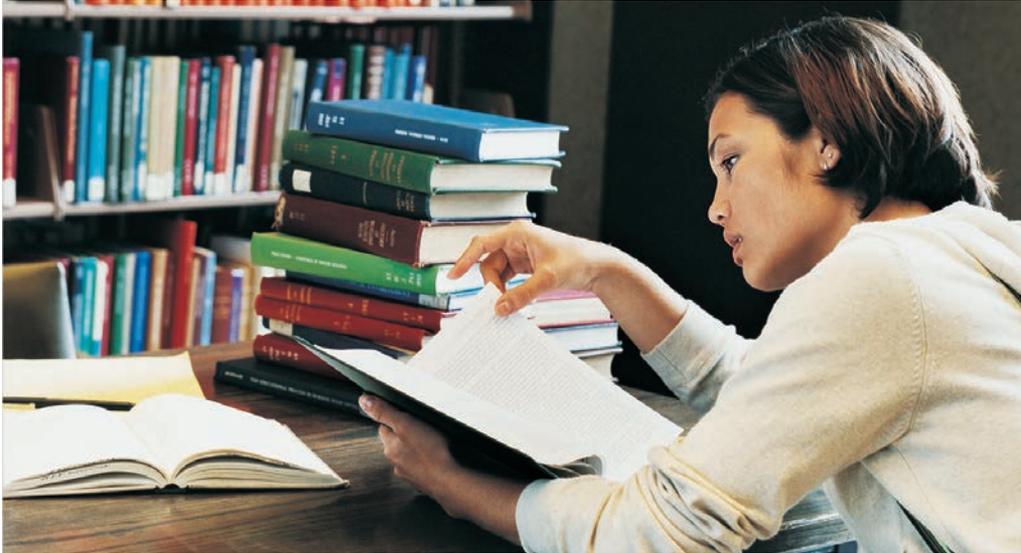
Another way to arouse the interest of your audience is to start with an attention-getting quotation. You might choose your quotation from Shakespeare or Confucius, from a poem, song, or film. Here is how one speaker used a quotation from Mark Twain to add a hint of humor to the introduction of a speech about the future of the stock market:

Mark Twain once said: “Predictions are very difficult to make—especially when they involve the future.”

You need not use a well-known or famous quotation. The following made an effective beginning for a speech about the growing popularity of bird watching in China:

“It is a moment I will always cherish. I was at the mouth of the Minjiang River, when I saw a Chinese crested tern—one of the rarest birds on Earth. I was so excited I could barely keep my binoculars from shaking.” These words come from my uncle, a member of the Fujian Bird Watching Society.

Notice that both the quotations used here as examples are relatively short. Opening your speech with a lengthy quotation is a sure way to set your audience yawning.



As you research your speeches, keep an eye out for quotations, stories, and other materials you can use to craft an introduction that will capture the attention of your listeners.

## Tell a Story

We all enjoy stories—especially if they are provocative, amusing, dramatic, or suspenseful. To work well as introductions, they should also be clearly relevant to the topic of the speech. Used in this way, stories are perhaps the most effective way to begin a speech.

Consider the story told by one speaker at the start of his remarks on heroes of the Sichuan earthquake:

Lin Hao was only 9 years old when the Sichuan earthquake struck Yingxiu Township. He was in school with 30 other students, but only 10 escaped from the building. Risking his own life, Lin Hao went back to the rubble and pulled two of his classmates to safety.

For his bravery, Lin Hao was named a Heroic Child by the Chinese people. In August 2008, people all over the world saw him as he walked into Bird's Nest alongside Yao Ming in the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games.

Like many good introductions, this one does a double job—it arouses the interest of the audience and gets listeners emotionally involved in the speech.

You can also use stories based on your personal experience. Here is how one medical student used such a story. She began by recounting the first time she observed doctors performing surgery in the operating room:

There I stood, wearing a surgical mask, in the middle of a large, brightly lit room. In the center of the room were five figures huddled over a table. I found it difficult to see since everything was draped in blue sheets, yet I didn't dare take a step toward the table.

Then one of the figures called to me, "Angela, get over here and take a closer look." My knees buckled as I walked through the sterile environment. But eventually I was there, standing over an unconscious body in the operating room.



**Video 8.2**

View the beginning of  
"Hoping to Heal."



Looking for a quotation to use in the introduction or conclusion of your speech? Visit Yahoo! Directory: Quotations (<http://dir.yahoo.com/Reference/Quotations/>) for a comprehensive roster of links to collected quotations on the Web.

To read introductions and conclusions from famous speeches, visit American Rhetoric ([www.americanrhetoric.com/](http://www.americanrhetoric.com/)).

The effectiveness of any story—especially a personal one—hinges on the speaker's delivery as well as on the content. If you begin your speech with a story, make sure you can deliver it with strong eye contact and expressive vocal variety.

The seven methods discussed above are the ones used most often by speakers to gain attention and interest. Other methods include referring to the occasion, inviting audience participation, using audio equipment or visual aids, relating to a previous speaker, and beginning with humor. For any given speech, try to choose the method that is most suitable for the topic, the audience, and the occasion.

### CREATE A POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AUDIENCE

In addition to gaining attention and interest, the introduction should foster a positive relationship with the audience. This is especially important whenever the speaker is controversial or advocates an unpopular position. It is also crucial in cross-cultural communication when the speaker needs to reach out across national or linguistic borders to create a bond with listeners. Here is an excellent example, from former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, speaking at the Great Hall of the People, in Beijing, in April 1984:

I'm honored to come before you today, the first American president ever to address your nation from the Great Hall of the People.

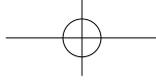
My wife, Nancy, and I have looked forward to visiting the people and treasures of your great and historic land, one of the world's oldest civilizations. We have marveled at Beijing's sweeping vistas, and we have felt the warmth of your hospitality touch our hearts.

We only regret that our visit will be so brief. I'm afraid it will be as a Tang Dynasty poet once wrote: "Looking at the flowers while riding on horseback." But you have another saying from *The Book of Han* which describes how Nancy and I feel: "To see a thing once is better than hearing about it a hundred times."

You can see from this excerpt why Reagan was known as the Great Communicator. Not only does he express great respect for China, but he finds exactly the right words from revered Chinese writings to generate positive sentiments on the part of his listeners.

### ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY

Credibility is mostly a matter of being qualified to speak on a given topic—and of being *perceived* as qualified by your listeners. If, for example, Zhang Ziyi got up before an audience to speak on the topic of nuclear physics, she would have to take drastic steps to demonstrate her credibility on the subject.



Telling a story is an excellent way to gain attention in a speech introduction. The story should be clearly relevant to the topic and should be delivered expressively with strong eye contact.

Establishing credibility in the introduction is important for student speakers, because they are not usually recognized as experts on their speech topics. Here is how one student established her credibility during a speech about the Eiffel Tower:

As a French major, I had an opportunity last summer to study in Paris and to spend time living with a French family. I was so impressed with the Eiffel Tower that I visited it four times and read everything I could find about it.

As this example shows, your credibility can be based on research, firsthand knowledge, or some combination of the two. Whatever the source of your expertise, be sure to let the audience know in your introduction.

**credibility**  
The audience's perception of whether a speaker is qualified to speak on a given topic.

## PREVIEW THE BODY OF THE SPEECH

Many people are poor listeners, but even good listeners need all the help they can get in sorting out a speaker's ideas. One way to help listeners is to tell them in the introduction what they should listen for in the rest of the speech. Nearly always, you should include a preview statement such as the following:

Today I will talk with you about the causes of high blood pressure, the strain high blood pressure is putting on China's health care system, and what people can do to reduce the likelihood of having high blood pressure.

There are many fascinating aspects of Xiangqi. This afternoon, I will focus on two: the origins of Xiangqi and the relationship between Xiangqi and Western chess.

Preview statements such as these serve another purpose as well. Because they usually come at the very end of the introduction, they provide a smooth lead-in to the body of the speech. They signal that the body of the speech is about to begin.

**preview statement**  
A statement in the introduction of a speech that identifies the main points to be discussed in the body.



## Checklist

### Speech Introduction

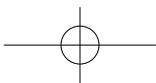
YES  NO

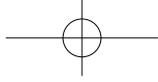
- |                          |                          |                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Do I gain the attention and interest of my audience by using one or more of the methods discussed in this chapter?       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Do I relate the speech topic to my audience?                                                                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Do I establish my credibility to speak on the topic?                                                                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. If my topic is controversial, do I create a positive relationship with my audience?                                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Do I provide a preview statement of the main points to be covered in the body of the speech?                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 6. Is the introduction limited to 10–20 percent of my entire speech?                                                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 7. Have I been creative in devising my introduction?                                                                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 8. Have I worked out the language of my introduction in detail?                                                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 9. Have I practiced the delivery of my introduction so I can present it fluently, confidently, and with strong eye contact? |

### SAMPLE INTRODUCTION WITH COMMENTARY

So far we have seen many excerpts showing how to fulfill the various objectives of an introduction. Now here is a complete introduction. The side comments indicate the principles used in developing the introduction.

Keeping Hope Alive	
COMMENTARY	SPEECH
<p>The speaker begins by gaining attention and relating to the audience. The second sentence uses a rhetorical question to convey the importance of the topic, while the third sentence states the central idea.</p> <p>The speaker establishes credibility by mentioning her experience as a volunteer for Project Hope.</p> <p>The speaker states the purpose of her speech and previews the main points she will discuss in the body.</p>	<p>I am sure most of you remember the anxious look of a big-eyed rural girl on the promotional poster of Project Hope. But do you know that every year in China, many children like the big-eyed girl are deprived of education because of poverty? By sponsoring a child through Project Hope, you can help him or her complete an elementary school education.</p> <p>During the past three years, I have worked as a volunteer teacher for Project Hope, and I have visited a number of elementary schools in China's remote mountainous areas.</p> <p>Today, I will show you the need to help rural children with their education. Then I will explain the functions and accomplishments of Project Hope. I will conclude by encouraging all of you to become involved with this highly ethical public service project.</p>





## TIPS FOR THE INTRODUCTION

1. Keep the introduction relatively brief. Under normal circumstances it should not constitute more than 10–20 percent of your speech.
2. Be on the lookout for possible introductory materials as you do your research. File them with your notes so they will be handy when you are ready for them.
3. Be creative in devising your introduction. Experiment with two or three different openings and choose the one that seems most likely to get the audience interested in your speech.
4. Don't worry about the exact wording of your introduction until you have finished preparing the body of the speech. After you have determined your main points, it will be much easier to make final decisions about how to begin the speech.
5. Don't apologize in your introduction. Avoid statements such as "I'm sorry to be so nervous," or "I wish I had done a better job preparing." Such statements weaken your credibility and give the audience little reason to pay attention to the rest of your speech.
6. Work out your introduction in detail. Some teachers recommend that you write it out word for word; others prefer that you outline it. Whichever method you use, practice the introduction over and over until you can deliver it smoothly from a minimum of notes and with strong eye contact. This will get your speech off to a good start and give you a big boost of confidence.
7. Don't start talking too soon. Make sure the audience has quieted down and is focused on you before you begin. Establish eye contact with the audience, smile, and then launch into your opening words. Give yourself every chance to make sure your introduction has the desired impact.



### Video 8.3

View Stephen E. Lucas for more guidance on creating introductions and conclusions.

## The Conclusion

"Great is the art of beginning," said the American poet Longfellow, "but greater the art is of ending." Longfellow was thinking of poetry, but his insight is equally applicable to public speaking. Your closing remarks are your last chance to drive home your ideas. Moreover, your final impression will probably linger in your listeners' minds. Thus you need to craft your conclusion with as much care as your introduction.

No matter what kind of speech you are giving, the conclusion has two major functions:

- To let the audience know you are ending the speech.
- To reinforce the audience's understanding of, or commitment to, the central idea.

Let us look at each.



## SIGNAL THE END OF THE SPEECH

It may seem obvious that you should let your audience know you are going to stop soon. However, you will sometimes hear speeches in which the speaker concludes so abruptly that you are taken by surprise. Too sudden an ending leaves the audience puzzled and unfulfilled.

How do you let an audience know your speech is ending? One way is through what you say. “In conclusion,” “My purpose has been,” “Let me end by saying”—these are all brief cues that you are getting ready to stop.

You can also let your audience know the end is in sight by your manner of delivery. The conclusion is the climax of a speech. A speaker who has carefully built to a peak of interest and involvement will not need to say “in conclusion.” By use of the voice—its tone, pacing, intonation, and rhythm—a speaker can build the momentum of a speech so there is no doubt when it is over.

### crescendo ending

A conclusion in which the speech builds to a zenith of power and intensity.

One method of doing this has been likened to a musical crescendo. As in a symphony, in which one instrument after another joins in until the entire orchestra is playing, the speech builds in force until it reaches a zenith of power and intensity.<sup>1</sup> (This does *not* mean simply getting louder and louder. It is a combination of many things, including vocal pitch, choice of words, dramatic content, gestures, pauses—and possibly loudness.)

A superb example of this method is the memorable conclusion to Martin Luther King’s “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop,” the speech he delivered the night before he was assassinated in April 1968. Speaking to an audience of 2,000 people in Memphis, Tennessee, he ended his speech with a stirring declaration that the civil rights movement would succeed despite the many threats on his life:

Like anybody, I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place, but I’m not concerned about that now. I just want to do God’s will, and he’s allowed me to go up to the mountain, and I’ve looked over and I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the Promised Land. So I’m happy tonight. I’m not worried about anything; I’m not fearing any man. Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord.

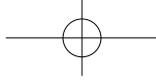
### dissolve ending

A conclusion that generates emotional appeal by fading step by step to a dramatic final statement.

Another effective method might be compared to the dissolve ending of a concert song that evokes deep emotions: “The song seems to fade away while the light on the singer shrinks gradually to a smaller and smaller circle until it lights only the face, then the eyes. Finally, it is a pinpoint, and disappears with the last note of the song.”<sup>2</sup> Here is a conclusion that does much the same thing. It was delivered at the 2004 CCTV Cup competition by Xia Peng, a student at Nanjing University.

In the body of his speech, Xia Peng explained that he is colorblind. Early in life, he said, he was ashamed of his colorblindness. But then he took a photography class in high school. His teacher told him that colorblindness made him a better photographer because he was more alert to theme, light, and shade without distraction from colors. In his conclusion, Xia Peng created a dissolve ending by evoking the emotions of his experience with photography:

My teacher’s words struck me. Later, I found out that the incidence of colorblindness is one in a thousand. To me, it is a blessing in disguise. With that in mind, I put a roll of color film in my



The conclusion is your last chance to drive home your ideas. Successful speakers craft their endings with great care to leave a strong final impression.

camera and set out to take pictures. With the snapping of the shutter, I could not help but to paint the color of wind in my own pictures. The colors lie in my heart.

Both the crescendo and the dissolve endings must be worked out with great care. Practice until you get the words and the timing just right. The benefits will be well worth your time.

## REINFORCE THE CENTRAL IDEA

The second major function of a conclusion is to reinforce the audience's understanding of, or commitment to, the central idea. There are many ways to do this. Here are the ones you are most likely to use.

### Summarize Your Speech

Restating the main points is the easiest way to end a speech. One speaker used this technique effectively in talking about the AIDS epidemic in Africa:

In conclusion, we have seen that the AIDS epidemic is having a devastating effect on African society. An entire adult generation is slowly being wiped out. An entirely new generation of AIDS orphans is being created. Governments in the nations most afflicted have neither the resources nor the expertise to counter the epidemic. Many African economies are being crippled by the loss of people in the workplace.

Before it's too late, the United Nations and developed countries need to increase their efforts to halt the epidemic and bring it under control. The lives and well-being of tens of millions of people hang in the balance.

The value of a summary is that it explicitly restates the central idea and main points one last time. But as we shall see, there are more imaginative and compelling ways to end a speech. They can be used in combination with a summary or, at times, in place of it.



#### Video 8.4

View the conclusion of Xia Peng, "Confronting Myself: Color of the Wind."



#### Video 8.5

View the conclusion of "AIDS in Africa: A World Crisis."



## End with a Quotation

A quotation is one of the most common and effective devices to conclude a speech. Here is a fine example, from Vice Premier Li Lanqing's speech to the International Olympic Committee as part of Beijing's bid to host the 2008 Olympic Games. After explaining the reasons why Beijing should be awarded the role of host city, Vice Premier Li concluded with these words:

Chinese sage Confucius says, "Is it not a delight after all to have friends come from afar!" Indeed, it is our delight to welcome all guests with open arms in Beijing in the year 2008. I am sure you will have a great Games in Beijing. Thank you!

The quotation from Confucius is particularly effective because it reinforces the personal tone of the speech. When you run across a *brief* quotation that so perfectly captures your central idea, keep it in mind as a possible conclusion.

## Make a Dramatic Statement

Rather than using a quotation to give your conclusion force and vitality, you may want to devise your own dramatic statement. Some speeches have become famous because of their powerful closing lines. One is Patrick Henry's legendary "Liberty or Death" oration. It takes its name from the final sentences Henry uttered on March 23, 1775, as he exhorted his audience to resist British tyranny:

Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death.

Although your speeches may not become famous, you can still rivet your listeners with a dramatic concluding statement. What follows is a particularly striking example, from a speech on suicide prevention. Throughout her remarks, the speaker referred to a friend who had tried to commit suicide the previous year. Then, in the conclusion, she said:

My friend is back in school, participating in activities she never did before—and enjoying it. I'm happy and proud to say that she's still fighting for her life and even happier that she failed to kill herself. Otherwise, I wouldn't be here today trying to help you. You see, I am my "friend," and I'm more than glad to say I've made it.

As you can imagine, the audience was stunned. The closing lines brought the speech to a dramatic conclusion. The speaker made it even more effective by pausing a moment before the last words and by using her voice to give them just the right inflection.

## Refer to the Introduction

An excellent way to give your speech psychological unity is to conclude by referring to ideas in the introduction. Here is how Gu Qiubei, of Shanghai International Studies University, used the method in her prepared speech at the 2003 21st Century Cup. Her topic was the tension between international tourism and environmental protection:



*Introduction:* There was once a physical therapist who traveled all the way from America to Africa to do a census about mountain gorillas. These gorillas are a main attraction to tourists from all over the world. . . . She witnessed a scene, a scene taking us to a place we never imagined, where, in the very depth of the African rain forest, surrounded by trees, flowers, and butterflies, the mother gorillas cuddled their babies.

Yes, that's a memorable scene in one of my favorite movies, called *Gorillas in the Mist*, based on the true story of Dian Fossey, who spent most of her lifetime in Rwanda to protect the eco-environment there, until the very end of her life. To me, the movie not only presents an unforgettable scene, but also acts as a timeless reminder that we should not develop the tourist industry at the cost of our eco-environment.



**Video 8.6**

View the beginning and ending of Gu Qiubei, "A Scene to Remember."

In the body of her speech, Gu Qiubei explained the manner in which tourism is causing ecological damage in many parts of the globe. Then, in her conclusion, she tied the whole speech together by returning to the story presented in her introduction:

*Conclusion:* Once again, I have come to think of Dian Fossey, because it is with her spirit, passion, courage, and strong sense of our eco-environment that we are taking our next step into the world. And no matter who we are, what we do, and where we go, in our minds there's always a scene to remember, a scene worth our effort to protect and fight for.

Summarizing the speech, ending with a quotation, making a dramatic statement, referring to the introduction—all these techniques can be used separately. But you have probably noticed that speakers often combine two or more in their conclusions. Actually, all four techniques can be fused into one—for example, a dramatic quotation that summarizes the central idea while referring to the introduction.

One other concluding technique is making a direct appeal to your audience for action. This technique applies only to a particular type of persuasive speech, however, and will be discussed in Chapter 14. The four methods covered in this chapter are appropriate for all kinds of speeches and occasions.

**SAMPLE CONCLUSION WITH COMMENTARY**

How do you fit these methods together to make a conclusion? Here is an example, from the speech about Project Hope whose introduction we looked at earlier.

<b>COMMENTARY</b>	<b>CONCLUSION</b>
<p>The speaker creates a full circle by referring back to her introduction. The use of repetition reinforces her ideas and lends rhythm to her prose.</p> <p>Referring to Project Hope's logo adds emotional appeal and ends the speech on a strong note.</p>	<p>Think back to the big-eyed little girl I mentioned at the beginning of this speech. Think about all the other children like her in rural areas throughout China. Remember what we saw about the educational needs of those children, and how you can make a difference in their lives by supporting Project Hope.</p> <p>The logo of Project Hope means that society cares for the development of young people like the ocean supports the rising sun. You can help all of China by being part of that ocean.</p>



## Checklist **Speech Conclusion**

YES



NO

- | YES                      | NO                       |                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1. Do I signal that my speech is coming to an end?                                                                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 2. Do I reinforce my central idea by (check all that apply):                                                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Summarizing the main points of my speech                                                                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Ending with a quotation                                                                                                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Making a dramatic statement                                                                                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Referring to the introduction                                                                                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 3. Is the conclusion limited to 5–10 percent of my entire speech?                                                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 4. Have I worked out the language of my conclusion in detail?                                                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 5. Have I practiced the delivery of my conclusion so I can present it fluently, confidently, and with strong eye contact? |

### TIPS FOR THE CONCLUSION

1. As with the introduction, keep an eye out for possible concluding materials as you research and develop the speech.

2. Conclude with a bang, not a whimper. Be creative in devising a conclusion that hits the hearts and minds of your audience. Work on several possible endings, and select the one that seems likely to have the greatest impact.

3. Don't be long-winded. The conclusion will normally make up no more than 5–10 percent of your speech.

4. Don't end with an apology. Statements such as "I'm sorry I didn't do a better job with my speech," or "I wish I had explained my ideas more clearly" are deadly to an effective conclusion. If you don't believe in your speech, your listeners won't either.

5. Don't leave anything in your conclusion to chance. Work it out in detail, and give yourself plenty of time to practice delivering it. Many speakers like to write out the conclusion word for word to guarantee it is just right. If you do this, make sure you can present it smoothly, confidently, and with feeling—without relying on your notes or sounding wooden. Make your last impression as forceful and as favorable as you can.



## SUMMARY

In most speech situations, you need to accomplish four objectives with the introduction: gain the attention and interest of your audience, create a positive relationship with the audience, establish your credibility, and preview the body of the speech. Every aspect of the introduction should be worked out in detail so as to create a favorable first impression.



The first objective of a speech conclusion is to let the audience know you are ending, which you can do by your words or by your manner of delivery. The second objective of a conclusion is to reinforce your central idea. You can accomplish this by summarizing the speech, ending with a quotation, making a dramatic statement, or referring to the introduction. Be creative in devising a vivid, forceful conclusion.

## KEY TERMS

rhetorical question (106)

crescendo ending (112)

credibility (109)

dissolve ending (112)

preview statement (109)



### Key-Term Exercise

Check your knowledge with the Key-Term Exercise for this chapter.

## EXERCISES FOR THINKING AND SPEAKING

1. Here are six speech topics. Explain how you might relate each to your audience in a speech introduction.

laughter

media violence

soccer

health care

historic preservation

climate change

2. Think of a speech topic (preferably one for your next speech in class). Create an introduction for your speech in which you gain the attention of the audience, establish your credibility, and preview the body of the speech.

3. Using the same topic as in Exercise 2, create a speech conclusion. Be sure to let your audience know the speech is ending, to reinforce the central idea, and to make the conclusion vivid and memorable.

## Public Speaking in Your Career

As the public relations manager of a media corporation, you are assigned to deliver two fund-raising speeches for cancer research. First, you will speak to business executives at a high-profile dinner in Beijing. Second, you will address faculty at a local university. Create an introduction for each speech; be sure to adapt your remarks to the different audiences and occasions.