

Structuring a Speech

Communications & Media

The classical arrangement, still the most reliable shape for spoken argument.

Six parts, in order.

1

Exordium

Win attention and goodwill. Say why this, why now, why you.

2

Narratio

The facts as you have them, told plainly and in order.

3

Partitio

State what you will argue, and in how many parts.

4

Confirmatio

Your proof, strongest argument placed first or last, not buried.

5

Refutatio

The main objection, stated fairly and answered.

6

Peroratio

Recapitulate, then ask for the specific thing you want.

Listeners remember the opening and the close best. Put nothing load-bearing in the middle that they cannot afford to lose.