

ment, main points, and conclusion. Start with those elements and add the title, introduction, conclusion, and all in outline form.

Let's say you're preparing a persuasive speech about the dangers of buying prescription medications online. Figure 12.2 provides an example of what your formal outline might look like.

TITLE: Buying Prescription Drugs Online Is Risky

Purpose statement: Persuade my audience that buying prescription medications online involves some risks.

Thesis statement: Buying prescription medications online is too risky to do.

INTRODUCTION

- I. Buying prescription medications online entails many risks.
 - A. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, online sales of prescription medications have nearly quadrupled in the past five years.
 - B. My friend Terrie bought an antidepressant from an online pharmacy and ended up seriously ill and in legal trouble.
 - C. **Thesis:** Buying prescription medications online is too risky to do.

Transition: We will now look at three of the biggest risks of buying prescription medications online: financial risks, medical risks, and legal risks.

BODY

- I. **Main Point 1:** Buying prescription medications online poses financial risks.
 - A. Purchases made from online pharmacies may not be covered by insurance, leaving consumers to bear the cost.
 - 1. Many insurance plans identify specific pharmacies from which patients can order medications.
 - 2. Out-of-pocket payments for medications can pose a large financial burden for a middle-class family.
 - B. Some pharmacies may not ship products that online customers order, causing consumers to lose money for purchases they never receive.
 - 1. Consumer research indicates that unfilled online orders are increasing in frequency.
 - 2. Patients who do not receive their products have few options for legal recourse against an online pharmacy.

Transition: Many people have lost significant amounts of money buying prescriptions online. Others have encountered medical risks.

- II. **Main Point 2:** Buying prescription medications online poses medical risks.
 - A. Online pharmacies may not be subject to government safety standards.
 - 1. Pharmacies registered outside of the United States are not subject to oversight by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration the way that U.S. pharmacies are.

- 2. Some online pharmacies are registered in countries with few, if any, government standards for pharmaceutical safety.
 - B. Consumers may receive medications containing unsafe ingredients.
 - 1. Medications sold online may contain inconsistent quantities of active ingredients.
 - 2. A study by the World Health Organization found that more than half of the medications sold online contained dangerous levels of potentially toxic substances.

Transition: Using medications bought online can put people's health at risk. It can also pose legal risks.

- III. **Main Point 3:** Buying prescription medications online poses legal risks.
 - A. Some online pharmacies may not be properly licensed to dispense medications.
 - 1. In the United States, a pharmacy must be staffed by a registered pharmacist who has a license to dispense medication.
 - 2. Online pharmacies registered outside the United States may employ few people, if any, with the credentials to practice pharmacy.
 - B. Consumers may be violating the law by purchasing prescription medications from unlicensed vendors.
 - 1. Purchasing controlled pharmaceutical products without a prescription is illegal in the United States, even if the products were purchased outside the country.
 - 2. U.S. customs officials have recently announced that locating and confiscating illegally purchased medications is an agency priority.

Transition: Many people find themselves in trouble with the law after buying prescription medications from online pharmacies.

CONCLUSION

- I. Review of main points
 - A. Ordering medications over the Internet may be convenient.
 - B. The financial, medical, and legal risks it entails make it irresponsible and unwise.
- II. Final remarks
 - A. It is crucial to exercise extreme caution when buying medications online.
 - B. People are much safer purchasing their prescription medications from reputable, licensed pharmacies in their own communities.

FIGURE 12.2

FORMAL SPEECH OUTLINE: BUYING PRESCRIPTION DRUGS ONLINE IS RISKY