

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 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