Chapter 13
Presentations to Inform

After all, the ultimate goal of all research is not objectivity, but truth.

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Getting Started

INTRODUCTORY EXERCISES

1. Please make a list of five activities you have participated in recently. Choose one and create a time order list, from start to finish, of at least five major steps involved in accomplishing the activity.
2. From the list of five activities above, please consider which of the activities the audience (or your class) has probably had the least experience with. Now make a list from that activity of at least three things you would explain to them so that they could better understand it. From that new list, consider how you might show those three things, including visual aids.

Storytelling is a basic part of human communication. You've probably told several short stories just today to relate to friends what the drive to school was like, how your partner has been acting, what your boss said to a customer, or even what your speech teacher did in class. With each story you were sharing information, but is sharing the same as informing? At first you might be tempted to say "sure," but consider whether you had a purpose for telling a friend about another friend's actions, or if the words you used to discuss your boss communicated any attitude.

At some point in your business career you will be called upon to teach someone something. It may be a customer, coworker, or supervisor, and in each case you are performing an informative speech. It is distinct from a sales speech, or persuasive speech, in that your goal is to communicate the information so that your listener understands. For example, let's say you have the task of teaching a customer how to use a remote control (which button does what) to program a DVD/R to record. Easy, you say? Sure, it's easy for you. But for them it is new, so take a moment and consider their perspective. You may recommend this unit versus that unit, and aim for a sale, but that goal is separate from first teaching them to be successful at a task they want to learn to perform. You may need to repeat yourself several times, and they may not catch on as fast as you expect, but their mastery of the skill or task they want to learn can directly lead to a

sale. They will have more confidence in you and in themselves once they've mastered the task, and will be more receptive to your advice about the competing products available.

While your end goal may be a sale, the relationship you form has more long-term value. That customer may tell a friend about the experience, show their family what they learned, and before you know it someone else comes in asking for you by name. Communicating respect and focusing on their needs is a positive first step. The informative speech is one performance you'll give many times across your career, whether your audience is one person, a small group, or a large auditorium full of listeners. Once you master the art of the informative speech, you may mix and match it with other styles and techniques.

13.1 Functions of the Presentation to Inform

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the functions of the speech to inform.
2. Explain the difference between exposition and interpretation.

Informative presentations focus on helping the audience to understand a topic, issue, or technique more clearly. You might say, "Is that all?" and the answer is both yes and no. An affirmative response underscores the idea that informative speeches do not seek to motivate the audience to change their minds, adopt a new idea, start a new habit, or get out there and vote. They may, however, inform audiences on issues that may be under consideration in an election or referendum. On the other hand, a negative response reaffirms the idea that to communicate a topic, issue, or subject clearly is a challenge in itself and shouldn't be viewed as a simplistic process. There are distinct functions inherent in a speech to inform, and you may choose to use one or more of these functions in your speech. Let's take a look at the functions and see how they relate to the central objective of facilitating audience understanding.

Share

The basic definition of communication highlights the process of understanding and sharing meaning. An informative speech follows this definition in the aspect of sharing content and information with an audience. You won't be asking the audience to actually do anything in terms of offering a response or solving a problem. Instead you'll be offering to share with the audience some of the information you have gathered relating to a topic. This act of sharing will reduce ignorance, increase learning, and facilitate understanding of your chosen topic.

Increase Understanding

How well does your audience grasp the information? This should be a guiding question to you on two levels. The first involves what they already know—or don't know—about your topic, and what key terms or ideas might be necessary for someone completely unfamiliar with your topic to grasp the ideas you are presenting. The second involves your presentation and the illustration of ideas. A bar chart, a pie graph, and a video clip may all serve you and the audience well, but how will each ingredient in your speech contribute to their understanding? The audience will respond to your attention statement and hopefully maintain interest, but how will you take your speech beyond superficial coverage of content and

effectively communicate key relationships that increase understanding? These questions should serve as a challenge for your informative speech, and by looking at your speech from an audience-oriented perspective, you will increase your ability to increase the audience's understanding.

Change Perceptions

How you perceive stimuli has everything to do with a range of factors that are unique to you. We all want to make sense of our world, share our experiences, and learn that many people face the same challenges we do. Many people perceive the process of speaking in public as a significant challenge, and in this text, we have broken down the process into several manageable steps. In so doing, we have to some degree changed your perception of public speaking. When you present your speech to inform, you may want to change the audience member's perceptions of your topic. You may present an informative speech on air pollution and want to change common perceptions such as the idea that most of North America's air pollution comes from private cars, or that nuclear power plants are a major source of air pollution. You won't be asking people to go out and vote, or change their choice of automobiles, but you will help your audience change their perceptions of your topic.

Gain Skills

Just as you want to increase the audience's understanding, you may want to help the audience members gain skills. If you are presenting a speech on how to make salsa from fresh ingredients, your audience may thank you for not only the knowledge of the key ingredients and their preparation but also the product available at the conclusion. If your audience members have never made their own salsa, they may gain a new skill from your speech. In the same way, perhaps you decide to inform your audience about eBay, a person-to-person marketplace much like a garage sale in which items are auctioned or available for purchase over the Internet. You may project onto a screen in class the main Web site and take the audience through a step-by-step process on how to sell an item. The audience may learn an important skill, clean out the old items in their garage, and buy new things for the house with their newfound skills. Your intentions, of course, are not to argue that salsa is better than ketchup or that eBay is better than Amazon, but to inform the audience, increasing their understanding of the subject, and in this case, gaining new skills.

Exposition versus Interpretation

When we share information informally, we often provide our own perspective and attitude for our own reasons. But when we set out to inform an audience, taking sides or using sarcasm to communicate attitude may divide the audience into groups that agree or disagree with the speaker. The speech to inform the audience on a topic, idea, or area of content is not intended to be a display of attitude and opinion. Consider the expectations of people who attend a formal dinner. Will they use whatever fork or spoon they want, or are there expectations of protocol and decorum? In any given communication context there are expectations, both implicit and explicit. If you attend a rally on campus for health care reform, you may expect the speaker to motivate you to urge the university to stop investing in pharmaceutical companies, for example. On the other hand, if you enroll in a biochemistry course, you expect a teacher to inform you about the discipline of biochemistry—not to convince you that pharmaceutical companies are a good or bad influence on our health care system.

The speech to inform is like the classroom setting in that the goal is to inform, not to persuade, entertain, display attitude, or create comedy. If you have analyzed your audience, you'll be better prepared to develop appropriate ways to gain their attention and inform them on your topic. You want to communicate thoughts, ideas, and relationships and allow each listener specifically, and the audience generally, to draw their own conclusions. The speech to inform is all about sharing information to meet the audience's needs, not your own. While you might want to inform them about your views on politics in the Middle East, you'll need to consider what they are here to learn from you and let your audience-oriented perspective guide you as you prepare.

Exposition

This relationship between informing as opposed to persuading your audience is often expressed in terms of exposition versus interpretation. Expositionmeans a public exhibition or display, often expressing a complex topic in a way that makes the relationships and content clear. Expository prose is writing to inform; you may have been asked to write an expository essay in an English course or an expository report in a journalism course. The goal is to communicate the topic and content to your audience in ways that illustrate, explain, and reinforce the overall content to make your topic more accessible to the audience. The audience wants to learn about your topic and may have some knowledge on it as you do. It is your responsibility to consider ways to display the information effectively.

Interpretation and Bias

Interpretation involves adapting the information to communicate a message, perspective, or agenda. Your insights and attitudes will guide your selection of material, what you focus on, and what you delete (choosing what not to present to the audience). Your interpretation will involve personal bias. Bias is an unreasoned or not-well-thought-out judgment. Bias involves beliefs or ideas held on the basis of conviction rather than current evidence. Beliefs are often called "habits of the mind" because we come to rely on them to make decisions. Which is the better, cheapest, most expensive, or the middle-priced product? People often choose the middle-priced product and use the belief "if it costs more it must be better" (and the opposite: "if it is cheap it must not be very good"). The middle-priced item, regardless of actual price, is often perceived as "good enough." All these perceptions are based on beliefs, and they may not apply to the given decision or even be based on any evidence or rational thinking.

By extension, marketing students learn to facilitate the customer "relationship" with the brand. If you come to believe a brand stands for excellence, and a new product comes out under that brand label, you are more likely to choose it over an unknown or lesser-known competitor. Again, your choice of the new product is based on a belief rather than evidence or rational thinking. We take mental shortcuts all day long, but in our speech to inform, we have to be careful not to reinforce bias.

Bias is like a filter on your perceptions, thoughts, and ideas. Bias encourages you to accept positive evidence that supports your existing beliefs (regardless of whether they are true) and reject negative evidence that does not support your beliefs. Furthermore, bias makes you likely to reject positive support for opposing beliefs and accept negative evidence (again, regardless of whether the evidence is true). So what is positive and what is negative? In a biased frame of mind, that which supports your existing beliefs is positive and likely to be accepted, while that which challenges your beliefs is likely to be viewed as negative and rejected. There is the clear danger in bias. You are inclined to tune out or ignore information, regardless of how valuable, useful, or relevant it may be, simply because it doesn't agree with or support what you already believe.

Point of View

Let's say you are going to present an informative speech on a controversial topic like same-sex marriage. Without advocating or condemning same-sex marriage, you could inform your audience about current laws in various states, recent and proposed changes in laws, the number of same-sex couples who have gotten married in various places, the implications of being married or not being able to marry, and so on.

But as you prepare and research your topic, do you only read or examine information that supports your existing view? If you only choose to present information that agrees with your prior view, you've incorporated bias into your speech. Now let's say the audience members have different points of view, even biased ones, and as you present your information you see many people start to fidget in their seats. You can probably anticipate that if they were to speak, the first word they would say is "but" and then present their question or assertion. In effect, they will be having a debate with themselves and hardly listening to you.

You can anticipate the effects of bias and mitigate them to some degree. First, know the difference between your point of view or perspective and your bias. Your point of view is your perception of an idea or concept from your previous experience and understanding. It is unique to you and is influenced by your experiences and also factors like gender, race, ethnicity, physical characteristics, and social class. Everyone has a point of view, as hard as they may try to be open-minded. But bias, as we've discussed previously, involves actively selecting information that supports or agrees with your current belief and takes away from any competing belief. To make sure you are not presenting a biased speech, frame your discussion to inform from a neutral stance and consider alternative points of view to present, compare and contrast, and diversify your speech. The goal of the speech to inform is to present an expository speech that reduces or tries to be free from overt interpretation.

This relates to our previous discussion on changing perceptions. Clearly no one can be completely objective and remove themselves from their own perceptual process. People are not modern works of minimalist art, where form and function are paramount and the artist is completely removed from the expression. People express themselves and naturally relate what is happening now to what has happened to them in the past. You are your own artist, but you also control your creations.

Objectivity involves expressions and perceptions of facts that are free from distortion by your prejudices, bias, feelings or interpretations. For example, is the post office box blue? An objective response would be yes or no, but a subjective response might sound like "Well, it's not really blue as much as it is navy, even a bit of purple, kind of like the color of my ex-boyfriend's car, remember? I don't care for the color myself." Subjectivity involves expressions or perceptions that are modified, altered, or impacted by your personal bias, experiences, and background. In an informative speech, your audience will expect you to

present the information in a relatively objective form. The speech should meet the audience's need as they learn about the content, not your feelings, attitudes, or commentary on the content.

Here are five suggestions to help you present a neutral speech:

1. Keep your language neutral and not very positive for some issues while very negative for others.
2. Keep your sources credible and not from biased organizations. The National Rifle Association (NRA) will have a biased view of the Second Amendment, for example, as will the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) on civil rights.
3. Keep your presentation balanced. If you use a source that supports one clear side of an issue, include an alternative source and view. Give each equal time and respectful consideration.
4. Keep your audience in mind. Not everyone will agree with every point or source of evidence, but diversity in your speech will have more to offer everyone.
5. Keep who you represent in mind: Your business and yourself.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The purpose of an informative speech is to share ideas with the audience, increase their understanding, change their perceptions, or help them gain new skills.
- An informative speech incorporates the speaker's point of view but not attitude or interpretation.

EXERCISES

1. Consider the courses you have taken in the past year or two, and the extent to which each class session involved an informative presentation or one that was more persuasive. Do some disciplines lend themselves more to informing rather than interpretation and attitude? Discuss your findings with your classmates.
2. Visit a major network news Web site and view a video of a commentator such as Rachel Maddow or Keith Olbermann (MSNBC) or Glenn Beck or Bill O'Reilly (Fox News). Identify the commentator's point of view. If you were giving a presentation to inform, would you express your point of view in a similar style?
3. On the same network news Web site you used for Exercise no. 2, view a video reporting a news event (as opposed to a commentator's commentary). Do you feel that the reporter's approach conveys a point of view, or is it neutral? Explain your feelings and discuss with your classmates.
4. What is the difference between an informative presentation and a persuasive one? Provide an example in your response.

5. Consider a sample speech to inform on a topic where you have a strong opinion. In what ways would you adjust your key points so as not to persuade your listeners? Discuss your ideas with a classmate.

13.2 Types of Presentations to Inform

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. Provide examples of four main types of speech to inform.

Speaking to inform may fall into one of several categories. Thepresentation to inform may be

- an explanation,
- a report,
- a description, or
- a demonstration of how to do something.

Let's explore each of these types of informative speech.

Explanation

Have you ever listened to a lecture or speech where you just didn't get it? It wasn't that you weren't interested, at least not at first. Perhaps the professor used language and jargon, or gave a confusing example, or omitted something that would have linked facts or concepts together. Soon you probably lost interest and sat there, attending the speech or lecture in body but certainly not in mind. An effective speech to inform will take a complex topic or issue and*explain* it to the audience in ways that increase audience understanding. Perhaps the speech where you felt lost lacked definitions upfront, or a clear foundation in the introduction. You certainly didn't learn much, and that's exactly what you want to avoid when you address your audience. Consider how you felt and then find ways to explain your topic—visually, using definitions and examples, providing a case study—that can lay a foundation on common ground with your audience and build on it.

No one likes to feel left out. As the speaker, it's your responsibility to ensure that this doesn't happen. Also know that to teach someone something new—perhaps a skill that they did not posses or a perspective that allows them to see new connections—is a real gift, both to you and the audience members. You will feel rewarded because you made a difference and they will perceive the gain in their own understanding.

Report

As a business communicator, you may be called upon to give an informative report where you communicate status, trends, or relationships that pertain to a specific topic. You might have only a few moments to speak, and you may have to prepare within a tight time frame. Your listeners may want "just the highlights," only to ask pointed questions that require significant depth and preparation on your part.

The informative report is a speech where you organize your information around key events, discoveries, or technical data and provide context and illustration for your audience. They may naturally wonder, "Why are sales up (or down)?" or "What is the product leader in your lineup?" and you need to anticipate their perspective and present the key information that relates to your topic. If everyone in the room knows the product line, you may not need much information about your best seller, but instead place emphasis on marketing research that seems to indicate why it is the best seller.

Perhaps you are asked to be the scout and examine a new market, developing strategies to penetrate it. You'll need to orient your audience and provide key information about the market and demonstrate leadership as you articulate your strategies. You have a perspective gained by time and research, and your audience wants to know why you see things the way you do, as well as learn what you learned. A status report may be short or long, and may be an update that requires little background, but always consider the audience and what common ground you are building your speech on.

Description

Have you ever listened to a friend tell you about their recent trip somewhere and found the details fascinating, making you want to travel there or visit a similar place? Or perhaps you listened to your chemistry teacher describe a chemical reaction you were going to perform in class and you understood the process and could reasonably anticipate the outcome. Describing information requires emphasis on language that is vivid, captures attention, and excites the imagination. Your audience will be drawn to your effective use of color, descriptive language, and visual aids. An informative speech that focuses description will be visual in many ways. You may choose to illustrate with images, video and audio clips, and maps. Your first-person experience combined with your content will allow the audience to come to know a topic, area, or place through you, or secondhand. Their imagination is your ally, and you should aim to stimulate it with attention-getting devices and clear visual aids. Use your imagination to place yourself in their perspective: how would you like to have someone describe the topic to you?

Demonstration

You want to teach the audience how to throw a fast pitch in softball or a curveball in baseball. You want to demonstrate how to make salsa or how to program the applications on a smartphone. Each of these topics will call on your kindergarten experience of "show and tell." A demonstrative speech focuses on clearly

showing a process and telling the audience important details about each step so that they can imitate, repeat, or do the action themselves. If the topic is complicated, think of ways to simplify each step. Consider the visual aids or supplies you will need. You may have noticed that cooking shows on television rarely show the chef chopping and measuring ingredients during the demonstration. Instead, the ingredients are chopped and measured ahead of time and the chef simply adds each item to the dish with a brief comment like, "Now we'll stir in half a cup of chicken stock." If you want to present a demonstration speech on the ways to make a paper airplane, one that will turn left or right, go up, down or in loops, consider how best to present your topic. Perhaps by illustrating the process of making one airplane followed by example on how to make adjustments to the plane to allow for different flight patterns would be effective. Would you need additional paper airplanes made in advance of your speech? Would an example of the paper airplane in each of the key stages of production be helpful to have ready before the speech? Having all your preparation done ahead of time can make a world of difference, and your audience will appreciate your thoughtful approach.

By considering each step and focusing on how to simplify it, you can understand how the audience might grasp the new information and how you can best help them. Also, consider the desired outcome; for example, will your listeners be able to actually do the task themselves or will they gain an appreciation of the complexities of a difficult skill like piloting an airplane to a safe landing? Regardless of the sequence or pattern you will illustrate or demonstrate, consider how people from your anticipated audience will respond, and budget additional time for repetition and clarification.

Informative presentations come in all sizes, shapes, and forms. You may need to create an "elevator speech" style presentation with the emphasis on brevity, or produce a comprehensive summary of several points that require multiple visual aids to communicate complex processes or trends. The main goal in an informative presentation is to inform, not to persuade, and that requires an emphasis on credibility, for the speaker and the data or information presented. Extra attention to sources is required and you'll need to indicate what reports, texts, or Web sites were sources for your analysis and conclusions.

Here are additional, more specific types of informative presentations:

- Biographical information
- Case study results
- Comparative advantage results

- Cost-benefit analysis results
- Feasibility studies
- Field study results
- Financial trends analysis
- Health, safety, and accident rates
- Instruction guidelines
- Laboratory results
- Product or service orientations
- Progress reports
- Research results
- Technical specifications

Depending on the rhetorical situation, the audience, and the specific information to be presented, any of these types of presentation may be given as an explanation, a report, a description, or a demonstration.

KEY TAKEAWAY

An informative speech may explain, report, describe, or demonstrate how to do something.

EXERCISES

1. Watch a "how-to" television show, such as one about cooking, home improvement, dog training, or crime solving. What informative techniques and visual aids are used in the show to help viewers learn the skills that are being demonstrated?
2. Prepare a simple "how-to" presentation for the class. Present and compare your results.
3. Compare and contrast two television programs, noting how each communicates the meaning via visual communication rather than words or dialogue. Share and compare with classmates.

13.3 Adapting Your Presentation to Teach

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Articulate and demonstrate an audience-centered perspective.
2. Provide and demonstrate examples of ways to facilitate active listening.

Successfully delivering an informative speech requires adopting an audience-centered perspective. Imagine that you are in the audience. What would it take for the speaker to capture and maintain your attention? What would encourage you to listen? In this section we present several techniques for achieving this, including motivating your audience to listen, framing your information in meaningful ways, and designing your presentation to appeal to diverse learning styles.

Motivating the Listener

In an ideal world, every audience member would be interested in your topic. Unfortunately, however, not everyone will be equally interested in your informative speech. The range of interest might extend from not at all interested to very interested, with individual audience members all across this continuum. So what is a speaker to do in order to motivate the listener?

The perception process involves selection or choice, and you want your audience to choose to listen to you. You can have all the "bells and whistles" of a dramatic, entertaining or engaging speech and still not capture everyone's attention. You can, however, use what you know to increase their chances of paying attention to you. Begin with your attention statement at the beginning of your speech and make sure it is dynamic and arresting. Remember what active listening involves, and look for opportunities throughout your speech to encourage active listening.

Let's highlight seven strategies by posing questions that audience members may think, but not actually say out loud, when deciding whether to listen to your speech. By considering each question, you will take a more audience-centered approach to developing your speech, increasing your effectiveness.

How Is Your Topic Relevant to Me?

A natural question audience members will ask themselves is, what does the topic have to do with me? Why should I care about it? Your first response might be because it's your turn to speak, so the least they can do is be respectful. Instead, consider the idea that you can lead a horse to water but you can't make her drink. If you are in a class, the audience is part of the class and they may be present in body, but they may arrive wishing they were somewhere else. You can put a stop to that wish by making your topic

relevant for your audience.Relevance means that the information applies, relates, or has significance to the listener. Find areas of common ground and build on them.

If you are going to present an informative speech about the drinking and driving laws in your state, you can be assured that many people in the audience drive automobiles, some may consume alcohol, and according to psychologist Abraham Maslow,[1] everyone needs safety. You may also consider that some of your listeners have had experiences with people who have consumed too much alcohol or people who have driven under the influence; they may have even had a loved one injured by an intoxicated driver. You may use the issue of safety to underscore relevance. You might consider briefly alluding to the effects of alcohol, asking rhetorically if audience members have ever seen someone try to walk, talk, or even drive after a drinking binge. All these strategies will reinforce the relevance of your topic and highlight connections across common ground.

What Will I Learn from You?

This question involves several issues. How much does the audience already know about your subject? What areas do you think they might not know? If you know that many people are aware of the laws in your state that pertain to intoxicated driving, you may consider informing them about proposed changes to these laws in your state legislature. Another approach might be to describe the impact of the laws on families and individuals. The consequences can be discussed in terms of annual statistics of motor vehicle accidents involving alcohol, the age and gender distribution of those involved, and the individual consequences in terms of financial penalties, impact on employment, and a criminal record. By building on the information the audience knows, briefly reviewing it and then extending it, illustrating it, and demonstrating the impact, you inform them of things they didn't already know.

Why Are You Interested in This Topic?

Your interest in your topic is an excellent way to encourage your audience to listen. Interest involves qualities that arouse attention, stimulate curiosity, or move an individual to a more excited state of mind. You probably selected your topic with your audience in mind, but also considered your interest in the topic. Why did you choose it over other topics? What about your topic aroused your attention? Did it stimulate your curiosity? Did it make you excited about researching and preparing a speech on it? These questions will help you clarify your interest, and by sharing the answers with your listeners, you will stimulate excitement on their part.

How Can I Use the Knowledge or Skills You Present to Me?

In an informative speech you are not asking your listeners to go out and vote, or to quit smoking tomorrow, as you would in a persuasive speech. Nevertheless, you need to consider how they will apply their new understanding. Application involves the individual's capacity for practical use of the information, skill, or knowledge. As a result of your speech, will your listeners be able to do something new like set up an auction on eBay? Will they better understand the importance of saving money and know three new ways to save for retirement?

For example, as a result of your informative speech on drunk driving laws, they may reflect on what a conviction would mean to them financially, think about how they would get to work if their driver's license was suspended, or imagine the grief of a family when an innocent person is killed in a drunk driving accident. Although your goal is not to persuade but inform, the new knowledge gained by your audience may motivate them to make new decisions about their lives.

When you prepare your presentation, consider ways you can actively show application of your material or content. Incorporate messages into your speech to highlight the practical use of the knowledge or skill. A couple of helpful comments about how the audience will actually use the information will go a long way toward encouraging listening and gaining attention.

What Is New about What You Propose to Present?

Sometimes humans seem like a mass of contradictions. We are naturally attracted to novelty, yet we appreciate predictability. We like clear organization, yet there are times when we enjoy a little controlled chaos.Novelty involves something new, unusual, or unfamiliar. As a speaker, how do you meet the two contrasting needs for familiarity and novelty?

Address both. You may want to start by forming a clear foundation on what you have in common with the audience. Present the known elements of your topic and then extend into areas where less is known, increasing the novelty or new information as you progress. People will feel comfortable with the familiar, and be intrigued by the unfamiliar.

You might also invert this process, starting from a relatively unfamiliar stance and working your way back to the familiar. This is a technique often used in cinema, where the opening shot is an extreme close-up of something and you can't guess what it is for lack of perspective. As the camera pulls back or pans left or

right, you get more clues and eventually are able to see what it is. It is intriguing, yet familiar. Consider ways to reinforce the novelty of your material to your audience to encourage listening.

Are You Going to Bore Me?

You have probably sat through your fair share of boring lectures where the speaker, teacher, or professor talks at length in a relatively monotone voice, fails to alternate his or her pace, incorporates few visual aids or just reads from a PowerPoint show for an hour in a dimly lighted room. Recall how you felt. Trapped? Tired? Did you wonder why you had to be there? Then you know what you need to avoid.

Being bored means the speaker failed to stimulate you as the listener, probably increased your resistance to listening or participating, and became tiresome. To avoid boring your audience, speak with enthusiasm, and consider ways to gain, and keep gaining, their attention. You don't have to be a standup comedian, however, to avoid being a boring speaker. Consider the rhetorical situation, and let the audience's needs guide you as you prepare. Adjust and adapt as they give you feedback, nonverbal or verbal. Consider the question, "What's in it for me?" from the audience's perspective and plan to answer it specifically with vivid examples. If your presentation meets their expectations and meets their needs, listeners are more likely to give you their attention.

You may also give some thought and consideration to the organizational principle and choose a strategy that promises success. By organizing the information in interesting ways within the time frame, you can increase your effectiveness. The opposite of boring is not necessarily entertaining. Variety in your speech, from your voice to your visual aids, will help stimulate interest.

Is This Topic Really as Important as You Say It Is?

No one wants to feel like his or her time is being wasted. That trapped, tired, or bored feeling is often related to a perception that the topic is not relevant or important. What is important to you and what is important to your audience may be two different things. Take time and plan to reinforce in your speech how the topic is important to your audience.Importance involves perceptions of worth, value, and usefulness.

How can you express that the topic is worthy of their attention? We've discussed the importance of considering why you chose the topic in the first place as a strategy to engage your audience. They will want to know why the topic was worthy of your time, and by extension, their time.

Consider how to express through images, examples, or statistics the depth, breadth, and impact of your topic. Tell the audience how many drivers under the age of twenty-one lose their lives each year in alcohol-related accidents, or what percentage of all under-twenty-one deaths in your state are related to a combination of drinking and driving. Remember, too, that because statistics may sound impersonal or overwhelming, focusing on a specific case may provide more depth. As a final tip, be careful not to exaggerate the importance of your topic, as you may run the risk of having the audience mentally call your bluff. If this happens, you will lose some credibility and attention.

Framing

The presentation of information shapes attitudes and behavior. This is done through framing and content. Framing involves placing an imaginary set of boundaries, much like a frame around a picture or a window, around a story, of what is included and omitted, influencing the story itself. What lies within the frame that we can see? What lies outside the frame that we cannot see? Which way does the window face? All these variables impact our perspective, and by the acts of gatekeeping and agenda setting, the media frames the stories we see and information we learn.

Suppose you are presenting an informative speech about media effects on viewers. You might cite the case of the 1993 movie *The Program* about college football players.[2] In one scene, to demonstrate their "courage," the football players lie on the divider line of a busy highway at night as cars rush past. After viewing the film, several teenagers imitated the scene; some were seriously injured and one died as a result.[3] How will you frame this incident in the context of your speech? You might mention that the production studio subsequently deleted the highway sequence from the film, that the sequence clearly indicated the actors were stunt men, or that *The Program* ultimately argues that such behavior is destructive and unwarranted. Or you might cite additional incidents where people have been injured or killed by trying a stunt they saw in the media.

One form of framing is gatekeeping. Gatekeeping, according to Pearson and Nelson, is "a process of determining what news, information, or entertainment will reach a mass audience."[4] The term "gatekeeping" was originally used by psychologist Kurt Lewin as a metaphor, featuring a series of gates that information must pass through before ever reaching the audience.[5] In the context of journalism and mass media, gates and gatekeepers may include media owners, editors, or even the individual reporter in

the context of mass communication. In the context of public speaking, you as the speaker are the gatekeeper to the information.

Another function of gatekeeping is agenda setting. Setting the agenda, just like the agenda of a meeting, means selecting what the audience will see and hear and in what order. Who decides what is the number one story on the evening news? Throughout the twentieth century, professional communicators working in the media industry set the agenda for readers, listeners, and viewers; today widespread Internet access has greatly broadened the number of people who can become agenda setters. In giving a speech, you select the information and set the agenda. You may choose to inform the audience on a topic that gets little press coverage, or use a popular story widely covered in a new way, with a case example and local statistics.

Another aspect of framing your message is culture. According to Pearson and Nelson, culture within the context of communication is "a set of beliefs and understandings a society has about the world, its place in it, and the various activities used to celebrate and reinforce those beliefs." [6] Themes of independence, overcoming challenging circumstances, and hard-fought victory are seen repeatedly in American programming and national speeches. They reflect an aspect of American culture. In the case of football, it is sometimes viewed as the quintessentially male American sport, and its importance on Thanksgiving Day is nothing short of a ritual for many Americans. If you went to a country in Latin America, you would probably find the television set tuned to a soccer game, where soccer is the revered sport. What do these sports say about culture?

One might argue that American football is aggressive and that, while the team is important, the individual's effort and record are celebrated in all the time between plays. Significant attention is given to the salary each individual player makes. In South American football, or soccer, the announcer's emphasis is on the team and at breaks, some discussion of key players is present, but not to the same degree, though this is changing.

What do these differences tell us? Our interpretation of these differences may point toward ways in which the media reinforces national culture and its values. However, since you are speaking to inform, take care not to overgeneralize. To state that American football is a male-viewer-dominated sport may be an accurate observation, but to exclude women when discussing the sport would lead to a generalization that is not accurate, and may even perpetuate a stereotype.

The media and its public communication is an active participant in the perpetuation of stereotypes in many ways. In the mid-1990s, Julia Wood [7]made an interesting observation of the world according to television: "It is a world in which males make up two-thirds of the population. The women are fewer in number perhaps because less than 10 percent live beyond 35. Those who do, like their male counterparts and the younger females, are nearly all white and heterosexual. In addition to being young, the majority of women are beautiful, very thin, passive, and primarily concerned with relationships and getting rings out of collars and commodes." [8]

This limited view, itself a product of gatekeeping, agenda setting, and the profit motive, has little connection to the "real world." Most people in the world are not white, and the majority of U.S. adults are either overweight or obese. There are more women than men in the adult populations of most countries. Women do not tend to die off at age thirty-five, in fact women on average live longer than men. Many people, particularly in a diverse country that is undergoing dramatic demographic changes, are not members of just one racial, ethnic, or cultural group but rather a member of many groups. Consider culture when selecting content and note that diversity of information and sources will strengthen your speech and relate to more members of your audience.

Additional Tips

Andrews, Andrews, and Williams [9] offer eight ways to help listeners learn that are adapted and augmented here.

Limit the Number of Details

While it may be tempting to include many of the facts you've found in your research, choose only those that clearly inform your audience. Try to group the information and then choose the best example to reduce your list of details. You don't want the audience focusing on a long list of facts and details only to miss your main points.

Focus on Clear Main Points

Your audience should be able to discern your main points clearly the first time. You'll outline them in your introduction and they will listen for them as you proceed. Connect supporting information to your clear main points to reinforce them, and provide verbal cues of points covered and points to come.

Use internal summaries, where you state, "Now that we've discussed X point, let's examine its relationship to Y point. This will help your audience follow your logic and organization and differentiate between

supporting material and main points. You may also want to foreshadow points by stating, “We’ll examine Z point in a moment but first let’s consider Y point.”

Pace Yourself Carefully

Talking too fast is a common expression of speech anxiety. One way to reduce your anxiety level is to practice and know your information well. As you practice, note where you are in terms of time at the completion of each point. After a few practice rounds, you should begin to see some consistency in your speed. Use these benchmarks of time to pace yourself. When you deliver your speech, knowing you have time, are well prepared, and are familiar with your speech patterns will help you to pace yourself more effectively.

Speak with Concern for Clarity

Not everyone speaks English as his or her first language, and even among English speakers, there is a wide discrepancy in speaking style and language use. When you choose your language, consider challenging terms and jargon, and define them accordingly. You may assume that everyone knows “NIH” stands for “National Institutes of Health,” but make sure you explain the acronym the first time you use it, just as you would if you were writing a formal article. Also pay attention to enunciation and articulation. As your rate of speech picks up, you may tend to slur words together and drop or de-emphasize consonants, especially at the ends of words. Doing this will make you harder to understand, discouraging listening.

Use Restatement and Repetition

There is nothing wrong with restating main points or repeating key phrases. The landmark speech titled “I have a dream,” which Martin Luther King Jr. delivered on August 28, 1963, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, used that phrase multiple times to reinforce the main message effectively.

Provide Visual Reinforcement

We’ve discussed the importance of visual aids to support and illustrate your content. As a speaker giving a prepared presentation, you have the luxury of preparing your visual aids with your audience in mind. In an impromptu speech, or a media interview, you may lack this luxury and find the effort challenging to appropriately reinforce your content. Take advantage of the known time frame before your speech to prepare effective visual aids and your speech will be more effective.

Include Time for Questions

You can't possibly cover all the information about a topic that every audience member would want to know in the normal five to seven minutes of a speech. You may do an excellent job of supporting and reinforcing your points, but many listeners may have questions. Take this as a compliment—after all, if you hadn't piqued their interest, they wouldn't have any questions to ask. Answering questions is an opportunity to elaborate on a point, reinforcing what you presented and relying on your thorough preparation to illustrate the point with more depth.

In some situations, the speaker will accept and answer questions during the body of the presentations, but it is more typical to ask listeners to hold their questions until the end. Depending on your instructor's guidelines, you may advise the class at the beginning of your presentation which of these formats you will follow.

Look for Ways to Involve Listeners Actively

Instead of letting your audience sit passively, motivate them to get involved in your presentation. You might ask for a show of hands as you raise a question like, "How many of you have wondered about…?" You might point out the window, encouraging your audience to notice a weather pattern or an example of air pollution. Even stepping away from the podium for a moment can provide variety and increase active listening.

Assess Learning, If Possible

Questions during a speech can help assess understanding, but also run the risk of derailing your speech as the audience pursues one point while you have two more to present. Make time for dialogue after the conclusion of your speech and encourage your audience to write down their questions and ask them at that time. Perhaps asking your audience to reflect on a point, and then to write a few sentences at the conclusion of your speech, might reinforce your central message.

KEY TAKEAWAY

To present a successful informative speech, motivate your audience by making your material relevant and useful, finding interesting ways to frame your topic, and emphasizing new aspects if the topic is a familiar one.

EXERCISES

1. Visit an online news Web site such as CNN, MSNBC, or PBS NewsHour. Select a news video on a topic that interests you and watch it a few times. Identify the ways in which the speaker(s) adapt the presentation to be informative and frame the topic. Discuss your results with your classmates.
2. Watch a news program and write down the words that could be considered to communicate values, bias, or opinion. Share and compare with the class.
3. Watch a news program and find an example that you consider to be objective, "just the facts," and share it with the class.
4. Note how television programs (or other media) use novelty to get your attention. Find at least three headlines, teaser advertisements for television programs, or similar attempts to get attention and share with the class.
5. How can an audience's prior knowledge affect a speech? What percentage of an informative presentation do you expect an audience to remember? Why?

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[1] Maslow, A. (1970). *Motivation and personality* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Harper & Row.

[2] James, C. (1993, October 24). If Simon says, 'Lie down in the road,' should you? *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/1993/10/24/weekinreview/the-nation-if-simon-says-lie-down-in-the-road-should-you.html

[3] Wilson, J., & Wilson, S. (1998). *Mass media/mass culture* (4th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

[4] Pearson, J., & Nelson, P. (2000). *An introduction to human communication: Understanding and sharing* (p. 133). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

[5] Wilson, J., & Wilson, S. (1998). *Mass media/mass culture* (4th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

[6] Pearson, J., & Nelson, P. (2000). *An introduction to human communication: Understanding and sharing* (p. 132). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

[7] Wood, J. (1994). *Gendered lives: Communication, gender, and culture* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Random House.

[8] Pearson, J., & Nelson, P. (2000). *An introduction to human communication: Understanding and sharing* (p.136). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill.

[9] Andrews, P. H., Andrews, J., & Williams, G. (1999). *Public speaking: Connecting you and your audience*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company.

13.4 Diverse Types of Intelligence and Learning Styles

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

1. Define the concepts of multiple intelligences and learning styles, and identify different types of intelligence and learning styles that audience members may have.

Psychologist Howard Gardner [1] is known for developing the theory of multiple intelligences in which he proposes that different people are intelligent in different domains. For example, some people may excel in interpersonal intelligence, or the ability to form and maintain relationships. Other people may excel in bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, or physical coordination and control. Still others have a high degree of musical intelligence or of logico-mathematical intelligence. While some psychologists argue that these are actually talents or aptitudes rather than forms of intelligence, the point remains that individual audience members will receive information differently, depending on the types of intelligence (or talent) they possess.

An outgrowth of the theory of multiple intelligences is thetheory of learning styles, the idea that people learn better if the message is presented in a strategy that fits with the types of intelligence in which they are strongest. Consider each style when preparing your speech. What styles might work best with your particular audience?

For example, suppose you work for a do-it-yourself home improvement store and part of your job is to give an informative seminar once a month on how to renovate a previously wallpapered wall. Your topic is specified for you, and you are very familiar with your subject matter, having worked in a variety of homes where old wallpaper needed to be removed or replaced. However, you never know from one month to the next how many people will come to your seminar or what their interests and level of prior knowledge are. If you begin by going around the room and asking each person to describe the wallpaper situation they plan to work on, this will help you determine what kinds of questions your audience hopes to have answered, but it won't tell you anything about their learning styles. Suppose instead that you ask them to state why they decided to attend and what their career or occupation is. Now you can gauge your presentation according to the likely learning styles of your audience. For example, if you have ten attendees and five of them work in the banking or information technology field, it is probably safe to assume they are fairly strong in the logical or mathematical area. This will help you decide how to talk about measuring the wall, calculating product quantities, and estimating cost. If another attendee is a

psychologist, he or she may be able to relate on the intrapersonal and interpersonal level. You may decide to strengthen your remarks about the importance of being comfortable with one's choices for renovating the room, seeking consensus from family members, and considering how the finished room will be suitable for guests. If some attendees work in the arts, they may be especially attentive to your advice about the aesthetic qualities of a well-executed wall surface renovation.

Table 13.1 "Diverse Learning Styles and Strategies" provides a summary of the seven styles and some suggested strategies to help you design your speech to align with each learning style.

Table 13.1 Diverse Learning Styles and Strategies

Learning Style	Examples	Strategies
Linguistic	Language, reading, verbal expression, speaking, writing, memorizing words (names, places, and dates)	Reading, oral presentations such as debates, reports, or storytelling
Logical/Mathematical	Use of numbers, perceiving relationships, reasoning (sequential, deductive, inductive), computation	Problem solving, graphic organizers, categorizing, classifying, working with patterns and relationships
Spatial	Think in three dimensions, mental imagery, design color, form and line within space	Maps, charts, graphic organizers, painting or drawing, visual aids, working with pictures or colors
Musical	Discern rhythm, pitch and tone, interpret music, identify tonal patterns, compose music	Rhythmic patterns and exercises, singing, music performance
Bodily/Kinesthetic	Sense of timing and balance, athletics, dance, work that takes physical skill	Drama, role playing, touching and manipulating objects, demonstrating
Interpersonal	Organizing, leading others, communicating, collaboration, negotiating, mediating	Group projects, interaction, debates, discussions, cooperative learning, sharing ideas
Intrapersonal	Reflection, thinking strategies, focusing/concentration	Individual projects, self-paced instruction, note-taking, reflection

KEY TAKEAWAY

An informative speech can be more effective when the learning styles of the audience members are addressed.

EXERCISES

1. Make a list of several people you know well, including family members, lifelong friends, or current roommates. Opposite each person's name, write the types of intelligence or the learning styles in which you believe that person is especially strong. Consider making this a reciprocal exercise by listing your strongest learning styles and asking family and friends to guess what is on your list.
2. How do you learn best? What works for you? Write a short paragraph and share with the class.
3. Write a review of your best teacher, noting why you think they were effective. Share with the class.
4. Write a review of your worst teacher, noting why you think they were ineffective. Share with the class.

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[1] Gardner, H. (1993). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

13.5 Preparing Your Speech to Inform

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Discuss and provide examples of ways to incorporate ethics in a speech.
2. Construct an effective speech to inform.

Now that we've covered issues central to the success of your informative speech, there's no doubt you want to get down to work. Here are five final suggestions to help you succeed.

Start with What You Know

Are you taking other classes right now that are fresh in your memory? Are you working on a challenging chemistry problem that might lend itself to your informative speech? Are you reading a novel by Gabriel García Márquez that might inspire you to present a biographical speech, informing your audience about the author? Perhaps you have a hobby or outside interest that you are excited about that would serve well. Regardless of where you draw the inspiration, it's a good strategy to start with what you know and work from there. You'll be more enthusiastic, helping your audience to listen intently, and you'll save yourself time. Consider the audience's needs, not just your need to cross a speech off your "to-do" list. This speech will be an opportunity for you to take prepared material and present it, gaining experience and important feedback. In the "real world," you often lack time and the consequences of a less than effective speech can be serious. Look forward to the opportunity and use what you know to perform an effective, engaging speech.

Consider Your Audience's Prior Knowledge

You don't want to present a speech on the harmful effects of smoking when no one in the audience smokes. You may be more effective addressing the issue of secondhand smoke, underscoring the relationship to relevance and addressing the issue of importance with your audience. The audience will want to learn something from you, not hear everything they have heard before. It's a challenge to assess what they've heard before, and often a class activity is conducted to allow audience members to come to know each other. You can also use their speeches and topic selection as points to consider. Think about age, gender, and socioeconomic status, as well as your listeners' culture or language. Survey the audience if possible, or ask a couple of classmates what they think of the topics you are considering.

In the same way, when you prepare a speech in a business situation, do your homework. Access the company Web site, visit the location and get to know people, and even call members of the company to

discuss your topic. The more information you can gather about your audience, the better you will be able to adapt and present an effective speech.

Adapting Jargon and Technical Terms

You may have a topic in mind from another class or an outside activity, but chances are that there are terms specific to the area or activity. From wakeboarding to rugby to a chemical process that contributes to global warming, there will be jargon and technical terms. Define and describe the key terms for your audience as part of your speech and substitute common terms where appropriate. Your audience will enjoy learning more about the topic and appreciate your consideration as you present your speech.

Using Outside Information

Even if you think you know everything there is to know about your topic, using outside sources will contribute depth to your speech, provide support for your main points, and even enhance your credibility as a speaker. "According to _____" is a normal way of attributing information to a source, and you should give credit where credit is due. There is nothing wrong with using outside information as long as you clearly cite your sources and do not present someone else's information as your own.

Presenting Information Ethically

A central but often unspoken expectation of the speaker is that we will be ethical. This means, fundamentally, that we perceive one another as human beings with common interests and needs, and that we attend to the needs of others as well as our own. An ethical informative speaker expresses respect for listeners by avoiding prejudiced comments against any group, and by being honest about the information presented, including information that may contradict the speaker's personal biases. The ethical speaker also admits it when he or she does not know something. The best salespersons recognize that ethical communication is the key to success, as it builds a healthy relationship where the customer's needs are met, thereby meeting the salesperson's own needs.

Reciprocity

Tyler [1] discusses ethical communication and specifically indicates reciprocity as a key principle. Reciprocity, or a relationship of mutual exchange and interdependence, is an important characteristic of a relationship, particularly between a speaker and the audience. We've examined previously the transactional nature of communication, and it is important to reinforce this aspect here. We exchange meaning with one another in conversation, and much like a game, it takes more than one

person to play. This leads to interdependence, or the dependence of the conversational partners on one another. Inequality in the levels of dependence can negatively impact the communication and, as a result, the relationship. You as the speaker will have certain expectations and roles, but dominating your audience will not encourage them to fulfill their roles in terms of participation and active listening. Communication involves give and take, and in a public speaking setting, where the communication may be perceived as "all to one," don't forget that the audience is also communicating in terms of feedback with you. You have a responsibility to attend to that feedback, and develop reciprocity with your audience. Without them, you don't have a speech.

Mutuality

Mutuality means that you search for common ground and understanding with the audience, establishing this space and building on it throughout the speech. This involves examining viewpoints other than your own, and taking steps to insure the speech integrates an inclusive, accessible format rather than an ethnocentric one.

Nonjudgmentalism

Nonjudgmentalism underlines the need to be open-minded, an expression of one's willingness to examine diverse perspectives. Your audience expects you to state the truth as you perceive it, with supporting and clarifying information to support your position, and to speak honestly. They also expect you to be open to their point of view and be able to negotiate meaning and understanding in a constructive way. Nonjudgmentalism may include taking the perspective that being different is not inherently bad and that there is common ground to be found with each other.

While this characteristic should be understood, we can see evidence of breakdowns in communication when audiences perceive they are not being told the whole truth. This does not mean that the relationship with the audience requires honesty and excessive self-disclosure. The use of euphemisms and displays of sensitivity are key components of effective communication, and your emphasis on the content of your speech and not yourself will be appreciated. Nonjudgmentalism does underscore the importance of approaching communication from an honest perspective where you value and respect your audience.

Honesty

Honesty, or truthfulness, directly relates to trust, a cornerstone in the foundation of a relationship with your audience. Without it, the building (the relationship) would fall down. Without trust, a relationship

will not open and develop the possibility of mutual understanding. You want to share information and the audience hopefully wants to learn from you. If you "cherry-pick" your data, only choosing the best information to support only your point and ignore contrary or related issues, you may turn your informative speech into a persuasive one with bias as a central feature.

Look at the debate over the U.S. conflict with Iraq. There has been considerable discussion concerning the cherry-picking of issues and facts to create a case for armed intervention. To what degree the information at the time was accurate or inaccurate will continue to be a hotly debated issue, but the example holds in terms on an audience's response to a perceived dishonestly. Partial truths are incomplete and often misleading, and you don't want your audience to turn against you because they suspect you are being less than forthright and honest.

Respect

Respect should be present throughout a speech, demonstrating the speaker's high esteem for the audience. Respect can be defined as an act of giving and displaying particular attention to the value you associate with someone or a group. This definition involves two key components. You need to give respect in order to earn from others, and you need to show it. Displays of respect include making time for conversation, not interrupting, and even giving appropriate eye contact during conversations.

Trust

Communication involves sharing and that requires trust. Trust means the ability to rely on the character or truth of someone, that what you say you mean and your audience knows it. Trust is a process, not a thing. It builds over time, through increased interaction and the reduction of uncertainty. It can be lost, but it can also be regained. It should be noted that it takes a long time to build trust in a relationship and can be lost in a much shorter amount of time. If your audience suspects you mislead them this time, how will they approach your next presentation? Acknowledging trust and its importance in your relationship with the audience is the first step in focusing on this key characteristic.

Avoid Exploitation

Finally, when we speak ethically, we do not intentionally exploit one another.Exploitation means taking advantage, using someone else for one's own purposes. Perceiving a relationship with an audience as a means to an end and only focusing on what you get out of it, will lead you to treat people as objects. The

temptation to exploit others can be great in business situations, where a promotion, a bonus, or even one's livelihood are at stake.

Suppose you are a bank loan officer. Whenever a customer contacts the bank to inquire about applying for a loan, your job is to provide an informative presentation about the types of loans available, their rates and terms. If you are paid a commission based on the number of loans you make and their amounts and rates, wouldn't you be tempted to encourage them to borrow the maximum amount they can qualify for? Or perhaps to take a loan with confusing terms that will end up costing much more in fees and interest than the customer realizes? After all, these practices are within the law; aren't they just part of the way business is done? If you are an ethical loan officer, you realize you would be exploiting customers if you treated them this way. You know it is more valuable to uphold your long-term relationships with customers than to exploit them so that you can earn a bigger commission.

Consider these ethical principles when preparing and presenting your speech, and you will help address many of these natural expectations of others and develop healthier, more effective speeches.

Sample Informative Presentation

Here is a generic sample speech in outline form with notes and suggestions.

Attention Statement

Show a picture of a goldfish and a tomato and ask the audience, "What do these have in common?"

Introduction

1. Briefly introduce genetically modified foods.
2. State your topic and specific purpose: "My speech today will inform you on genetically modified foods that are increasingly part of our food supply."
3. Introduce your credibility and the topic: "My research on this topic has shown me that our food supply has changed but many people are unaware of the changes."
4. State your main points: "Today I will define genes, DNA, genome engineering and genetic manipulation, discuss how the technology applies to foods, and provide common examples."

Body

1. *Information*. Provide a simple explanation of the genes, DNA and genetic modification in case there are people who do not know about it. Provide clear definitions of key terms.
2. *Genes and DNA*. Provide arguments by generalization and authority.

3. *Genome engineering and genetic manipulation*. Provide arguments by analogy, cause, and principle.
4. *Case study*. In one early experiment, GM (genetically modified) tomatoes were developed with fish genes to make them resistant to cold weather, although this type of tomato was never marketed.
5. Highlight other examples.

Conclusion

Reiterate your main points and provide synthesis, but do not introduce new content.

Residual Message

"Genetically modified foods are more common in our food supply than ever before."

KEY TAKEAWAY

In preparing an informative speech, use your knowledge and consider the audience's knowledge, avoid unnecessary jargon, give credit to your sources, and present the information ethically.

EXERCISES

1. Identify an event or issue in the news that interests you. On at least three different news networks or Web sites, find and watch video reports about this issue. Compare and contrast the coverage of the issue. Do the networks or Web sites differ in their assumptions about viewers' prior knowledge? Do they give credit to any sources of information? To what extent do they each measure up to the ethical principles described in this section? Discuss your findings with your classmates.
2. Find an example of reciprocity in a television program and write two to three paragraphs describing it. Share and compare with your classmates.
3. Find an example of honesty in a television program and write two to three paragraphs describing it. Share and compare with your classmates.
4. Find an example of exploitation depicted in the media. Describe how the exploitation is communicated with words and images and share with the class.
5. Compose a general purpose statement and thesis statement for a speech to inform. Now create a sample outline. Share with a classmate and see if he or she offers additional points to consider.

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[1] Tyler, V. (1978). Report of the working groups of the second SCA summer conference on intercultural communication. In N. C. Asuncio-Lande (Ed.), *Ethical Perspectives and Critical Issues in Intercultural Communication* (pp. 170–177). Falls Church, VA: SCA.

13.6 Creating an Informative Presentation

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Discuss the parts of an informational presentation.
2. Understand the five parts of any presentation.

An informational presentation is common request in business and industry. It's the verbal and visual equivalent of a written report. Information sharing is part of any business or organization. Informative presentations serve to present specific information for specific audiences for specific goals or functions. The type of presentation is often identified by its primary purpose or function. Informative presentations are often analytical or involve the rational analysis of information. Sometimes they simply "report the facts" with no analysis at all, but still need to communicate the information in a clear and concise format. While a presentation may have conclusions, propositions, or even a call to action, the demonstration of the analysis is the primary function.

A sales report presentation, for example, is not designed to make a sale. It is, however, supposed to report sales to date and may forecast future sales based on previous trends.

An informative presentation does not have to be a formal event, though it can be. It can be generic and nonspecific to the audience or listener, but the more you know about your audience, the better. When you tailor your message to that audience, you zero in on your target and increase your effectiveness. The emphasis is on clear and concise communication, but it may address several key questions:

- Topic: Product or Service?
- Who are you?
- Who is the target market?
- What is the revenue model?
- What are the specifications?
- How was the information gathered?
- How does the unit work?
- How does current information compare to previous information?

Table 13.2 "Presentation Components and Their Functions" lists the five main parts or components of any presentation.[1]

Table 13.2 Presentation Components and Their Functions

Component	Function
Attention Statement	Raise interest and motivate the listener
Introduction	Communicate a point and common ground
Body	Address key points
Conclusion	Summarize key points
Residual Message	Communicate central theme, moral of story, or main point

You will need to address the questions to establish relevance and meet the audience's needs. The five parts of any speech will serve to help you get organized.

Sample Speech Guidelines

Imagine that you have been assigned to give an informative presentation lasting five to seven minutes. Follow the guidelines in Table 13.3 "Sample Speech Guidelines" and apply them to your presentation.

Table 13.3 Sample Speech Guidelines

1. Topic	Choose a product or service that interests you, research it, and report your findings in your speech.
2. Purpose	Your general purpose, of course, is to inform. But you need to formulate a more specific purpose statement that expresses a point you have to make about your topic—what you hope to accomplish in your speech.
3. Audience	Think about what your audience might already know about your topic and what they may not know, and perhaps any attitudes toward or concerns about it. Consider how this may affect the way that you will present your information.
4. Supporting Materials	Using the information gathered in your search for information, determine what is most worthwhile, interesting, and important to include in your speech. Time limits will require that you be selective about what you use. **Use visual aids!**
5. Organization	a. Write a central idea statement that expresses the message, or point, that you hope to get across to your listeners in the speech. Determine the two to three main points that will be needed to support your central idea.

	c. Finally, prepare a complete sentence outline of the body of the speech.
6. Introduction	Develop an opening that will get the attention and interest of your listeners, express your central idea or message, lead into the body of your speech.
7. Conclusion	The conclusion should review and/or summarize the important ideas in your speech and bring it to a smooth close.
8. Delivery	The speech should be delivered extemporaneously (not reading but speaking), using speaking notes and not reading from the manuscript. Work on maximum eye contact with your listeners. Use any visual aids or handouts that may be helpful.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Informative presentations illustrate, explain, describe, and instruct the audience on topics and processes.

EXERCISES

1. Write a brief summary of a class or presentation you personally observed recently; include what you learned. Compare with classmates.
2. Search online for an informative speech or presentation that applies to business or industry. Indicate one part or aspect of the presentation that you thought was effective and one you would improve. Provide the link to the presentation in your post or assignment.
3. Pick a product or service and come up with a list of five points that you could address in a two-minute informative speech. Place them in rank order and indicate why.
4. With the points discussed in this chapter in mind, observe someone presenting a speech. What elements of their speech could you use in your speech? What elements would you not want to use? Why? Compare with a classmate.

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[1] McLean, S. (2003). *The basics of speech communication*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

13.7 Additional Resources

To listen to speeches from great figures in history, visit the History Channel's audio speech archive. http://www.history.com/video.do?name=speeches

What were the greatest speeches of the twentieth century? Find out here.http://gos.sbc.edu/top100.html

Visit this eHow link for a great video demonstrating how to remove ink stains from clothing. http://www.ehow.com/video_2598_remove-ink-stains.html

To improve your enunciation, try these exercises from the Mount Holyoke College site. http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/speech/enunciation.htm

The Merriam-Webster dictionary site provides a wealth of resources on words, their meanings, their origins, and audio files of how to pronounce them.http://www.merriam-webster.com

For information on adapting your speech for an audience or audience members with special needs, explore this index of resources compiled by Ithaca College.http://www.ithaca.edu/wise/topics/speech_language.htm

Dr. Richard Felder of North Carolina State University presents this questionnaire to assess your learning styles.http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html

The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association offers an array of Web resources on ethics. http://www.asha.org/practice/ethics

Visit this site for a list of more than thirty informative topics for a business speech. http://www.speech-topics-help.com/informative-business-speech-topics.html

Visit this eHow site to get ideas for an audience-oriented informative speech topic. http://www.ehow.com/how_2239702_choose-topic-informative-speech.html