Spoken Arguments

Notes from Everything’s an Argument
Introductions and Conclusions

- Provocative statements
- Puzzling statements
- Opinion
- Question
- Memorable anecdote
- Powerful quotation
- Vivid visual
Toni Morrison
Nobel Prize for Literature Speech

“Once upon a time there was an old woman. Blind but wise.” or was it an old man? A guru, perhaps. Or a griot, soothing restless children. I have heard this story, or one exactly like it, in the lore of several cultures.

“Once upon a time there was an old woman. Blind. Wise”
Structures and Signposts

- Organizational structures **must** be **crystal** clear
- Offer overview of main points toward beginning
- Clear beginning, middle, end
- Pause between main ideas/points
- Use "signposts" to mark change of topic
Signposts= explicit transitions

• First, second
• Finally
• Next
• On the contrary
Example: the second major crisis in the Soviet Union was...

• OR repeat key words or phrases
Example: MLK Jr.– “I have a dream...”
Diction and Syntax

• Pay attention to sentence length
• Sentence organization
• Concrete terminology
• Illustrate abstractions with descriptions of concrete examples
Using Figurative Language

- Repetition
- parallelism
- Climactic order
- Comparisons
Visually

Get your message across

Support your claims

Use:

– Examples
– Illustrations
– Data

Make sure visuals are:

• Simple
• Clear
• Easy to read
If you use slides:

• Follow the visual directions
• Overview
• Don’t repeat out loud what you write
• Don’t rely on color or graphics
• Use bullets
• Use headings
• Use large print and few words (3-6 per bullet)
!!Most important!!

• DELIVERY, DELIVERY, DELIVERY
• Practice your speech delivery *with* visuals
  – Even the professionals practice!
• Make sure you are audible
• Enunciate
• Stand
• Use a lectern
Tips

• Each 8.5 x 11 sheet of writing = 2.5 minutes
• Each 5 x 7 index card = 1.5 minutes
• Time yourself
• Ask a friend in the audience to signal you
• Too much length/detail = bored audience