

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

Visuals

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