

STRUCTURAL FUNDAMENTALS: INTRODUCTIONS, BODIES & CONCLUSIONS

THE **INTRODUCTION**: FIVE GUIDES PLUS ONE

1. Oral: Grow *initial* attention—Silence.

- ✓ Want people to listen, pay attention, wonder what's going to happen? Use **6** seconds of silence before uttering one word. Anticipation.
- ✓ Want people to ruminate on what you've just said, before going on to your next Point? Use **3** seconds of silence before saying one word. Anticipation.



2. Oral or Written: Grow *initial* attention—Mystery. Examples—

- ✓ "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." Dickens, *Tale of Two Cities*
- ✓ "It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen." Orwell, 1984
- ✓ "In the beginning, God..." Moses, from *In the Beginning*
- ✓ "In the beginning was the Word..." John, from *In the Beginning*
- ✓ "Call me Ishmael." Melville, *Moby Dick (The Whale)*
- ✓ "I had been sent to Mexico to cover a murder, one of a remarkable kind." Michener, *Mexico*



3. Maintain *ongoing* attention: Give a **reason to listen**. Meat for meeting/reading. Examples—

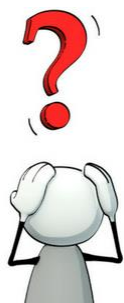
- ✓ "I am dying, so are you. (**3** seconds of silence) So what?"
- ✓ "Guilt is a valuable asset for the Christian." (**3** seconds of silence, **and repeat**)
- ✓ "Salvation has always been a paradox: are we saved by works, or by faith? Reality? Both are true; (**3** seconds of silence) both are false."
- ✓ "Scholars have failed to discover, resolve, implicate, share the pragmatic truth regarding..."
- ✓ "Three issues have given scholars/believers/theologians/preachers nightmares about..."

4. Identify *you*, explain why *you* are talking/writing about this subject. Possibly answer:

- ✓ Why you're particularly qualified... But, do so gently, obliquely, clearly.
- ✓ What motivated you to write/speak about "the reason to listen?" Why this meet? Why this meat?

5. Outline/Preface/Preview...

- ✓ Preview content.
 - ✓ Stipulate goals.
 - ✓ Clarify limits.



6. **Tease** them to listen/read further—revealing a mystery, learning more, becoming better, avoiding pain, reducing ignorance, or clarifying something important.

THE **BODY** ... MEET THE MEAT

"Three Points," period, end of sentence, end of paragraph, end of chapter, end of book, end of life (here anyway). [I was, I am, I will be. Yes, order is key.]

- ✓ Clarify each Point.
- ✓ Authenticate each Point.
- ✓ Illustrate each Point.
- ✓ Show how each Point is germane and connected to the Introduction's tease and goals.
- ✓ Efficiently summarize each Point. Then...
- ✓ Smooth, lubricate, transmission transitions from Introduction, to and between Points, and to Conclusion.

SMOOTH IT, DON'T BUMP IT.

THE **CONCLUSION**: SECRETS & DISCLOSURES

1. **Oral** communication: keep it a secret you're "ending."

- ✓ When people hear "*In conclusion...*" or "*Finally, let me say...*" or, they see you put your notes away, too often people reach for their coats, wonder what's next, or utter, aloud or to themselves, "Finally, sheesh!" (Hopefully not too loud.) They stop listening, attending to you, and often ignore perhaps the most important part of your talk.

2. **Written** communication is quite different. Announce with trumpets you are concluding/summarizing/ending your work.

- ✓ Readers need to know all the effort their brains have been exercising has been worth it. Time is especially valuable when one has or takes the time to read. Assure them their time was not wasted.



4. **Both oral and written conclusions should —**
- A. Review the content of the “three” points.
 - B. Review why these “three” meet the meat of the Introduction.

Demonstrating how the goals proffered in/by the Introduction have been achieved is an almost guaranteed way to achieve reader/listener understanding, appreciation and/or acceptance.

- C. Clarify what meat has **NOT** been proffered.
- D. Give listeners/readers a lollipop to take home. Some good choices are:
 - a) A pithy so what.
 - b) A sweet remembrance.
 - c) A tagline to put in their pocket, purse, cellphone, list of they want/need to explore/share/ponder.
 - d) A challenge to explore, learn, and/or explore further the meat you've offered, or what you have **not** offered.
 - e) A challenge to explore, learn more, and/or *disagree* with the meat you *have* offered.



PUT A STAKE IN THE MEAT YOU’VE COOKED.
RARE IS THE CHEF WHO DOES NOT ENCOURAGE HIS/HER GUESTS.

