

## WHAT NOT TO DO: SPEECH MAIN POINTS

Sure, looking at what to do is helpful, but sometimes looking at what not to do can be of even greater help. So, what shouldn't you do when writing the main points (or topic sentences) for a speech?

In general, while writing the main points for a speech and the supporting material, don't do the following:

- Don't have a set of random points on a topic for your main points. There should be a *unifying* idea beneath all of your main points.
- Don't forget to keep your main points separate from each other. Students can fall into a scenario where there is so much overlap between main points that the audience will group two or more main points as one. Make sure each main point is separate from the others.
- Don't order your main points randomly. Use the order that is most logical or effective for arguing what you want to argue.
- If you have a thesis, don't include main points unless they support it.
- Don't use too many main points. Usually, in a speech, the audience will start to lose track of the main points if you use more than four.
- Don't use a question as a substitute for stating a main point. Normally, speech main points are declarative statements.
- Don't use fragments. Speech main points tend to be complete sentences.
- Don't rely on one source for all of your main points.
- Don't forget to verbally cite any sources you use in your main point or while defending your main point.
- When defending or supporting your main points, don't use a source unless your audience will find it credible.
- Don't forget you need to back up each main point. Do you have supporting details?



Winston Churchill, one of the best public speakers in history.

Resources used: "Basics of Public Speaking," Kathi Groenendyk, Calvin College.

"Supporting a Speech," Ka Leo Kumu, University of Hawai'i Maui Community College Speech Department, 2002.

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