



Beijing Foreign Studies University
教育部 - 出国人员培训部

i Based on: 《公共演讲的艺术》（第7版），乔治·L·格赖斯、约翰·F·斯金纳 著，中国人民大学出版社，2012年。

Public Speaking

Unit 3, Lesson 1: organizational patterns for main ideas

Instructor:
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Spring Term,
2026





If you want me to talk for
ten minutes, I'll come
next week. If you want me
to talk for an hour, I'll
come tonight.

—Woodrow Wilson

I have made this letter
longer than usual,
because I lack the time to
make it short.

—Pascal¹



Lesson 1

01	Warm-up: organizing the body of a speech
02	Theory (Part 1): topical division, chronological division, causal division, problem-solution divisions
03	Practice 1: analyzing the structure of speech samples
04	Practice 2: improvising a speech using a structure of key ideas
04	Theory (Part 2): pro-con division, spatial division, mnemonic division, need-plan division
05	Practice 2: generating your speech key-idea division
06	Homework: reading



Warm-up: Organizing the Body of a Speech

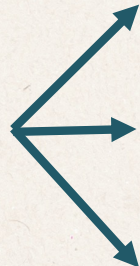
A well-organized speech has a...

Clear beginning (introduction)



"Did you know walking just 20 minutes a day can change your life?"

Middle (body)



"First, walking improves your heart health."

"Second, walking clears your mind and reduces stress."

"Finally, walking outdoors boosts your vitamin D and energy levels."

End (Conclusion)



"In short, it helps your heart, your mind, and your mood. Just start walking."





Warm-up: Organizing the Body of a Speech

Listen to Barack Obama's 1-min speech and find the **three examples** he uses in the **body** of his speech:

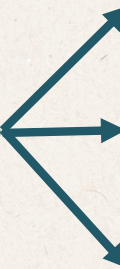


**Clear beginning
(introduction)**



"Some of the most successful people in the world are the ones who've had the most failures."

Middle (body)



J.K. Rowling: first book was rejected 12 times before it was finally published.

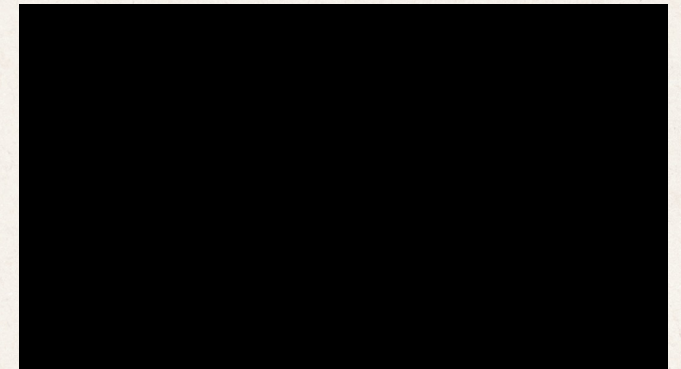
Michael Jordan: cut from his high school basketball team.

These people **succeeded** because they understood that you can't let your failures define you

End (Conclusion)



"No one's born being good at all things. You become good at things through hard work."



**Fill-in the
worksheet**





Topic 3, Part 1: Ways to divide a speech



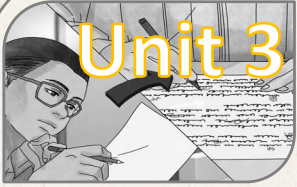
Topical division: This is the most common pattern. You break the main topic into smaller, related subtopics. It is useful for narrowing broad subjects.

Example 2 (Persuasive):

Specific Purpose: To persuade the audience to adopt a pet.

Key Ideas:

- I. Caring for a pet **reduces** anxiety and stress.
- II. Caring for a pet **increases** exercise and physical health.
- III. Caring for a pet **decreases** loneliness and depression.
- IV. Caring for a pet **enhances** empathy and self-esteem.



Chronological Division: This pattern organizes main points in time order. It is ideal for explaining a history or a sequence of steps.

Example:

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about the history of smartphones in China

Key Ideas:

- I. The 2000s: The era of foreign brands (Nokia, Motorola)
- II. The 2010s: The rise of domestic brands (Xiaomi, Huawei)
- III. Today: 5G technology and innovation leadership



Problem-Solution Division: a straightforward pattern for persuasive speeches. The structure is fixed: you first establish a compelling problem and then present a convincing solution.

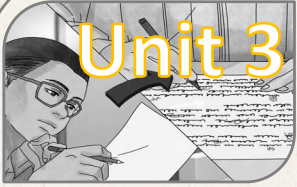
Example:

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience on the types and tastes of coffee

Key Ideas:

- I. Our national parks are threatened.
 - A. Political influence is a threat.
 - B. Environmental pollution is a threat.
 - C. Inadequate staffing is a threat.

- II. Our national parks can be saved.
 - A. The National Park Service should have greater independence.
 - B. Environmental laws should be stricter.
 - C. Funding should be increased.



Causal Division: This pattern traces a subject from its causes to its effects, or from effects back to causes. It is common for medical or scientific topics.

Example:

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience about the effects and causes of sports-victory riots

Key Ideas:

I. Effects

- . A. Death and injuries
- . B. Vandalism
- . C. Law enforcement costs

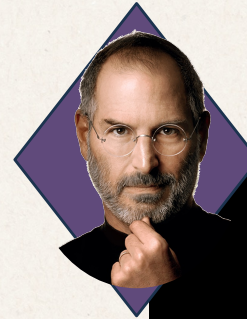
II. Causes

- . A. The competitive nature of sports
- . B. Mob psychology
- . C. Unfavorable economic conditions
- . D. Inadequate police presence



Practice 1: analyzing the structure of speech samples

Let's watch these **one-minute speeches** by two business giants and let's **analyze the structure** they use:



Fill-in the
worksheet

https://expressmastery.com/public_speaking/unit_3_mini-speeches/

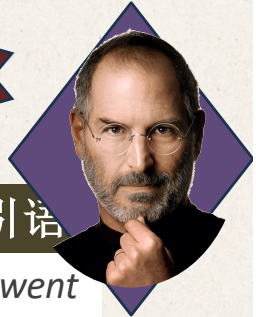


Practice 1: analyzing the structure of speech samples



Steve Job's speech chronological organization:

Answers



Time	Key Idea	Direct Quote / 演讲中的直接引语
I. The Past (Age 17)	He read a quote that changed his thinking.	"When I was 17, I read a quote that went something like: 'If you live each day as if it was your last, someday you'll most certainly be right.'"
II. The 33 Years Since	He practiced a daily routine based on that quote.	"For the past 33 years, I've looked in the mirror every morning and asked myself: 'If today were the last day of my life, would I want to do what I am about to do today?'"
III. The Present and Future	He uses this tool to make big choices and offers it to the audience.	"Remembering that I'll be dead soon is the most important tool I've ever encountered to help me make the big choices in life."

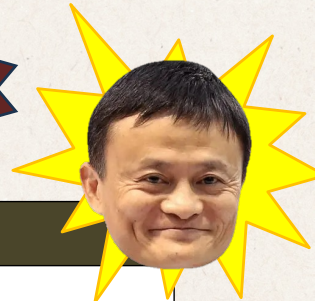


Practice 1: analyzing the structure of speech samples



Jack Ma's problem-solution speech organization:

Answers

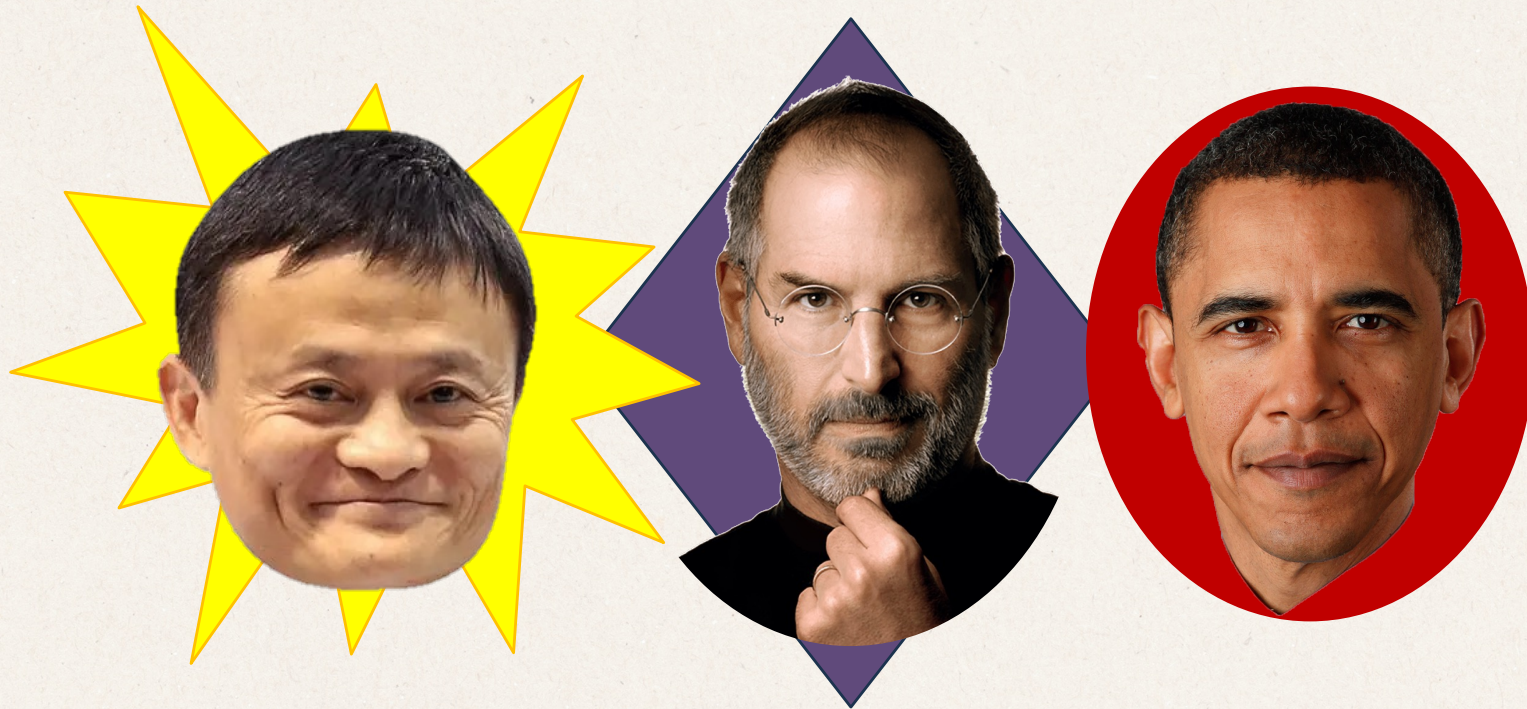


Section	Key Idea	Direct Quote from Speech
I. Problem	People believe tough challenges are impossible to overcome.	"If everybody says this is going to be very tough..."
II. Solution	Think differently, act differently, and accept that success requires sacrifice.	"I'm very interested in that tough question and I pick up and say how can we do it in a different way. Because nothing is easy, nothing is free. If you want to be successful, you have to think different, you have to do different, you have to pay the price."
III. Proof	Alibaba's 18-year journey shows that hard work leads to success.	"Alibaba 18 years to today's size. Yeah, we are lucky, but we work much harder than most of the people. We never sleep well and sound in the evening. I traveled last year 806 hours a year in the plane. In the plane I'm working hard. My team works very hard. 18 years, we work like a normal company 70 years, day and night. Nothing is free, nothing is easy."



Practice 2: delivering a mini-speech

Choose one of the three speeches we have worked with today.
Use the notes you made about that speech, practice reciting it,
and then say it in front of the class:





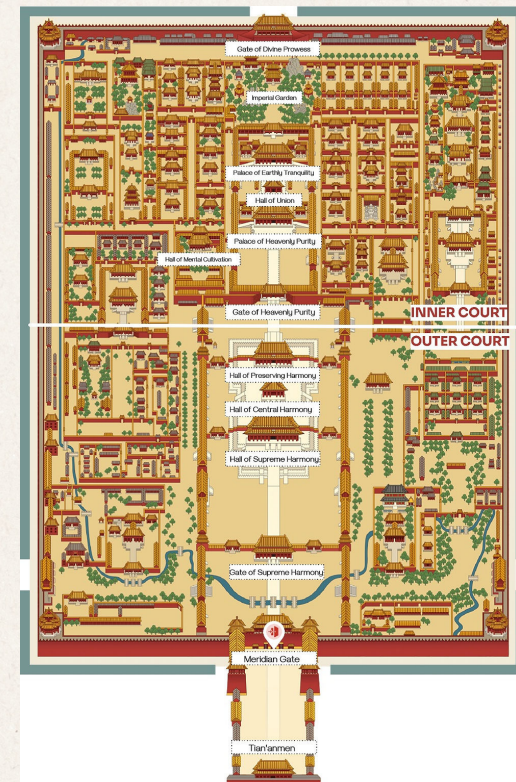
Topic 3, Part 1: Ways to divide a speech



Spatial Division: This pattern organizes points based on physical location or geography. It works well for describing objects or places.

Example:

- **Specific Purpose:** To inform the audience about the halls and palaces of the Forbidden City in Beijing, China
- **Key Ideas:**
 - I. The Halls of Harmony
 - II. The Palace of Heavenly Purity
 - III. The Palace of Earthly Tranquility
 - IV. The Hall of the Cultivation of the Mind





Pro-Con Division: it presents both sides of an issue. Because it offers a balanced perspective, it is often used for informative speeches. However, if you choose to defend the stronger side after discussing both, it becomes a *pro-con assessment*, which is appropriate for persuasive speeches.

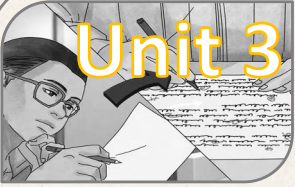


Example:

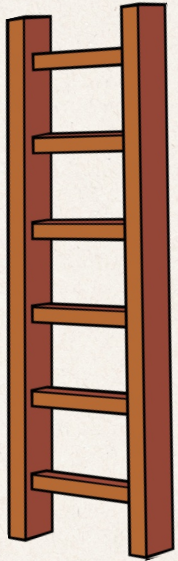
Specific Purpose: To inform the audience of the arguments for and against an increase in the minimum wage

Key Ideas:

- I. Increasing the minimum wage would be beneficial.
 - A. *The number of poor would decrease.*
 - B. *The number of people on welfare would decrease.*
 - C. *The concept of social justice would be affirmed.*
- II. Increasing the minimum wage would be harmful.
 - A. *Unemployment would increase.*
 - B. *Inflation would increase.*
 - C. *Business bankruptcies would increase.*



Mnemonic or Gimmick Division: a memory device to help the audience remember the key ideas. This is often done by having the first letter of each point spell out a word. This pattern works well for informative speeches because it aids retention.

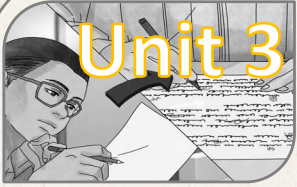


Example:

Specific Purpose: To inform the audience on how to improve listening

Key Idea: Robert Montgomery's six guidelines for better listening

- L:** Look at the other person.
- A:** Ask questions.
- D:** Don't interrupt.
- D:** Don't change the subject.
- E:** Express emotions with control.
- R:** Responsively listen.



Unit 3

Need-Plan Division: It uses a four-step approach: (1) establish a need or deficiency, (2) present a proposal to meet the need, (3) show how the proposal satisfies the need, and (4) suggest a plan for implementing the proposal. This pattern is **commonly used in sales** and is effective for prompting an audience to action.



Fill-in the worksheet

Example:

- **Specific Purpose:** To persuade the audience that employers should provide health promotion programs for their employees

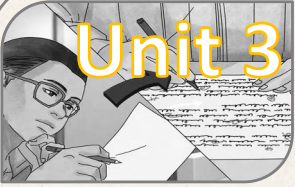
- **Key Ideas:**

- I. (Need) _____

- II. (Proposal) _____

- III. (Satisfaction) _____

- IV. (Implementation Plan) _____



Unit 3

Need-Plan Division: It uses a four-step approach: (1) establish a need or deficiency, (2) present a proposal to meet the need, (3) show how the proposal satisfies the need, and (4) suggest a plan for implementing the proposal. This pattern is **commonly used in sales** and is effective for prompting an audience to action.



Answers

Example:

- **Specific Purpose:** To persuade the audience that employers should provide health promotion programs for their employees
- **Key Ideas:**
 - I. (Need) Employee illness results in absenteeism, lost productivity, and increased health care costs.
 - II. (Proposal) Employers should establish on-site health and fitness centers for their employees.
 - III. (Satisfaction) When health promotion programs have been tried, they have reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, and capped health care costs.
 - IV. (Implementation Plan) Employers should offer exercise programs, alcohol- and drug-awareness education, stress-management workshops, antismoking clinics, and health status testing.



Task: generating your speech key-idea organization

Choose your favorite key-idea **organizational division** and make a draft of the ideas you will include in your speech and the order in which you will develop them.

选择你最喜欢的关键思想划分方式，并草拟你将纳入演讲中的观点及其发展顺序。

topical

problem-solution

spatial

pro-con

chronological

causal

need-plan

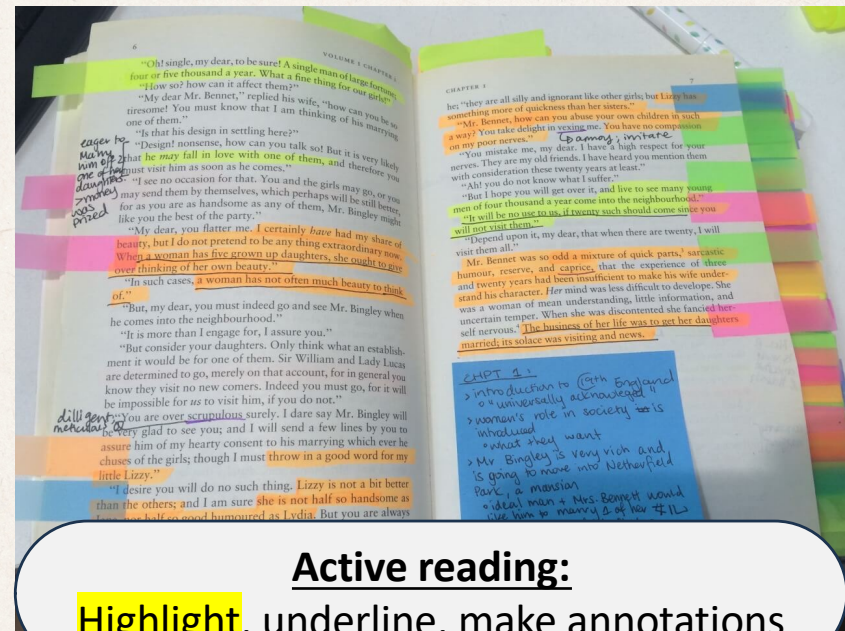
mnemonic



Homework:

Read pages **163 to 166** of our textbook 《公共演讲的艺术》 and make notes about the following topics:

1. Develop the key idea
 - a. Signpost the idea
 - b. State the idea
 - c. support the idea
 - d. Summarize the idea
2. Connect the key ideas



Active reading:

Highlight, underline, make annotations