

# Purpose Statements, Thesis Statements, and Outlines

Emily Heady, Ph.D.

Executive Director, University Writing Program

# My Charge

- Talk about...
  - Crafting a good thesis statement
  - Formulating a specific purpose statement
  - Writing a coherent outline

# Your Assignment

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# Requirements

- 4-6 minutes
- Persuades listeners to change their thinking and/or behavior
- Be credible
- Use emotional appeal
- Develop speech with a logical pattern that is explained in your text
- 6 sources
- Written outline must be handed in early

# Purpose Statements

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# Good Purpose Statements

- Announce your topic and say a little bit about what you want to say about it
- Are either broad and general or specific and explicit (you need to do both)
- Are achievable & realistic
- Appear VERY early on (if you include it) and in your outline
- Depend on YOU, not your listeners
- Are descriptive, not argumentative
- Reveal both the type of the effects you hope your speech will have as well as the specific changes that will result

# Bad Purpose Statements

- Are vague
- Do not make the leap from general to specific
- Do not reveal WHY you are making the speech
- Do not lead into the speech that follows
- Are confused with the thesis statement

# What's Wrong (or Right) with These Purpose Statements?

- “I am going to make a speech about dogs.”
- “You are going to be totally convinced by my speech that dogs are much better than cats.”
- “In this speech, I will discuss the characteristics, behaviors, attitudes, habitats, and survival mechanisms of dogs throughout history, starting with the biblical era and continuing until today.”
- “It is the purpose of this speech to persuade the audience that three basic steps must be taken to increase the adoption rate for dogs in no-kill shelters.”
- “Throughout history, dogs have shown an uncanny ability to adapt to their environment.”

# Thesis Statements

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# Good Thesis Statements

- Are clear and concise
- Set the course of the speech
- Appear at the beginning or end of the introduction and in your outline
- Follow logically from the purpose statement
- Must be proven
- Are echoed throughout the speech
- Often follow the format of the Aristotelian “enthymeme” (claim + reason)

# Bad Thesis Statements

- Are generally accepted as true
- Are hard to find
- Are factual
- Are too broad
- Cannot be proven
- Do not lead into the essay that follows
- Are shrill
- Are statements of belief

# On abortion...

- It is clear that abortion ends a life.
- Abortion is just the same as murder.
- Abortion is the most basic of rights available to women.
- Opponents and proponents of abortion have never had a chance to vote on its legality.
- No one can argue with the fact that abortion stops a beating heart.
- Abortion is legal in the U.S. today less because we believe in a woman's right to end a pregnancy than because we have an impoverished understanding of personhood.

# What's Wrong (or Right) with These Thesis Statements?

- “I believe that we need to educate ourselves better about genetically modified food.”
- “Some genetically modified foods are harmful; others are not.”
- “Genetically modified foods, while not always harmful, must be subject to increased regulation by the FDA.”
- “Like it or not, our food is genetically modified, so we’d better just live with it.”
- “Much discussion of the benefits and risks of genetically modified foods has taken place; in this paper, I will survey this discussion, and I will also offer my own opinion.”

# Outlining

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Toulmin Method

# The Standard Outline

- Introduction
- Body
  - Point 1
  - Point 2
  - Point 3
- Conclusion
  
- ...but we can do better (enter Toulmin)

# About This Outline

- Good things:
  - It's very clear.
  - It's very logical.
  - It forces you to have all the major components of a good speech.
  - It CAN work!
- Potentially Bad things:
  - There are no connections between sections.
  - The thoughts are not complete.
  - There is no room for the opposition.

# Introduction

- *Exordium* (Get the reader's attention)
- *Narratio* (Background info/summary of relevant information)
- *Propositio* (Thesis)
- *Partitio* (Where this speech will go)
- Include your purpose statement and thesis in **OBVIOUS** places.

# Presentation of Position

- *Confirmatio* (body—all your reasons and proofs, presented in a way that is audience-friendly)
  - Use sub-heads as necessary
  - Lead with a strong point, bury weaker points in the middle, and finish strong.
  - Your points should be made in TOPIC SENTENCES.
  - All reasons/proofs should be set up with transitions and then concluded before moving to the next.

# Opposing Viewpoints

- *Confutatio* (summary of opposition and response to their arguments)
  - May be included within the *confirmatio* or given its own section.
  - Summarize/cite your opponents' STRONGEST arguments.
  - If relevant, accept correction from your opponents, or explain your disagreement in one of these ways:
    - Show that they have misinterpreted facts
    - Show that they have reasoned poorly
    - Show that they haven't thought about consequences
    - Show that they have a flawed belief system
    - Show that they value different things than we do

# Conclusion

- *Peroratio* (sums up, leaves a good final impression, call for action)
  - Do not simply repeat yourself; rather, draw out key points and arrange them logically.
  - Suggest where to go next—articulate the limitations of the scope of your study and a call for further research.

# What to do with this model

- USE IT!
- Don't feel too confined by it, but make sure its major parts are represented in your speech.
- Adjust the length of each section according to the needs of your speech and audience.
- *E.g.*, An explanatory speech will have a proportionally long background info section.