

Specific Purpose Statements

Once you know the type of speech you are giving (informative, persuasive), your next step is to write its purpose statement. The specific purpose statement is a planning tool and is **NOT ACTUALLY DELIVERED IN THE SPEECH**. (Your textbook says otherwise; please ignore this advice.)

The specific purpose statement **FOCUSES YOUR PREPARATIONS ON THE RESPONSE THAT YOU WANT FROM YOUR AUDIENCE**.

Four guidelines will help you develop effective specific purpose statements:

1. Begin your specific purpose statement with the following words:

"After listening to my speech, my audience will . . ."

2. Complete the sentence so that you identify the specific effect you want your speech to have on the audience:

*"After listening to my speech, my audience will **UNDERSTAND** the effects of El Nino on the local weather."*

*"After listening to my speech, my audience will **TAKE STEPS** to reduce their risk of identity theft."*

*"After listening to my speech, my audience will **ROCOGNIZE** the important roles played by bacteria the environment."*

The specific purpose statement starts with the opening to focus on the audience, states what effect is desired from the audience, and identifies a topic:

OPENING + EFFECT DESIRED + TOPIC

3. Your specific purpose statement should avoid phrases like "know more about." A phrase like this is too vague and unfocused to be useful in stating your purpose.

Ineffective: *"After listening to my speech, my audience will know more about analyzing the audience in preparation for a speech."*

More Effective: *"After listening to my speech, my audience will understand four major factors to consider when analyzing the audience prior to a speech."*

4. Limit your specific purpose statement to one distinct idea. If your specific purpose statement includes connecting words--such as ***and*** or ***but***, your sentence may have two or more ideas.

Ineffective: *"After listening to my speech, my audience will be better informed about the latest efforts to ban all cigarette advertising around public schools and a proposal to prohibit smoking in and around all college campus buildings."*

There are two purposes stated here. Either might make a good speech, but they cannot both be accomplished in a single presentation.

5. Make sure that your goal--the response that you wish to achieve from your audience--can be accomplished in the time allotted to you (usually 5-7 minutes).

Ineffective: *"After listening to my speech, my audience will recognize the different types of soldiers who served in the Civil War."*

More Effective: *"After listening to my speech, my audience will recognize the role of African American soldiers in the Civil War."*