

Formulating the Specific Purpose Statement for your Speech

Definition

A concise statement articulating what the speaker will achieve in giving the speech. It merges your general purpose, topic, and audience to identify the particular objective you want to accomplish. (Public Speaking: The Evolving Art, 2012)

A well written specific purpose statement focuses on the behavioral response that you want from your audience and should guide the development of your speech during the entire preparation process. (Public Speaking Handbook, 2013).

Purpose

It is used to:

- *Determine if your speech is appropriate for the general purpose for the assignment: to inform, to persuade, or to entertain*
- *Help you to stay focused on your purpose through your speech*
- *Determine the appropriate organizational pattern to accomplish the goal/purpose for your speech*
- *Identify the main points that are appropriate to accomplish your purpose*
- *Distinguish between support that is relevant to accomplish your goal and support that doesn't relate to the overall purpose for your speech*

Guidelines for Writing a Specific Purpose Statement

- Limit the specific purpose to a **single idea**.
- It is one single declarative sentence. It therefore ends in a period and is not written as a question statement (The Speaker's Primer, 2012).
- Starts with the phrase, "After listening to my speech my audience" This helps the speaker to focus on another important part of the communication process which is listening and to be mindful of how the presentation may impact the ability of the audience to comprehend the message.

- Use words that refer to **observable** or **measurable** behavior. **Use** verbs such as list, explain, describe, or write when attempting to inform your audience. **Do not** use words such as know, understand or believe. When attempting to persuade your audience, do not use words such as convince or persuade. Use words that are more descriptive of the action you want the audience to take or
- It is evolutionary and may change depending upon how the rest of the speech is coming together. Although it may be adjusted during your planning, in the end, the specific purpose must reflect how all the ideas fit together in your speech. (The Speaker's Primer, 2012).

Examples of Specific Purpose Statements

Specific Purpose Statements for Informative Speeches

1. *After listening to my speech, my classmates will be able to determine when to purchase organic over inorganic foods.*
2. *After listening to my speech, my classmates will be able to explain why the cost of college textbooks is a major problem.*
3. *After listening to my speech, my peers will be able to describe how to be successful in a job interview.*
4. *After listening to my speech, my classmates will be able to list the steps to improve their credit score.*
5. *After listening to speech, my classmates will be able to identify the type of dog that would be suitable for their needs.*
6. *After listening to my speech, my classmates will be able to list ways to protect themselves from becoming a victim of identity theft.*

Specific Purpose Statements for Problem-Solution Persuasive Speeches

(Specific purpose statements for problem-solution persuasive speeches are written to reflect the action that the speaker wants to persuade the audience to take after listening to the speech. It can be a very specific action or a general action yet to be determined. An example of a specific action would be to get your audience to volunteer to purchase a five dollar bag of groceries from your local supermarket to help stamp out hunger in your neighborhood. A more general action would be to get your audience to take action to stamp out hunger in your community. A more specific action may be determined after the speaker has sufficiently researched the problem to determine a reasonable course of action.)

1. *After listening to my speech my classmates will take action to prevent cheating in college.*
2. *After listening to my speech my classmates will take steps to eliminate human trafficking.*
3. *After listening to my speech, my peers will agree that stricter gun control laws should be implemented.*

4. *After listening to my speech, my classmates will sign the online pledge to stop texting while driving.*
5. *After listening to my speech, my classmates will quit or no longer engage in binge drinking.*
6. *After listening to my speech, my classmates will advocate for harsher punishment for people who engage in or facilitate prescription drug abuse.*

Study the chart below to help you analyze the specific purpose statements above and to write a specific purpose statement for your informative and persuasive speeches.

Analyzing Informative Specific Purpose Statements

Starts with “After listening to my speech	Identifies the audience	Incorporate A VERB that names an observable, measurable action that the audience can take at the end of the speech	Identifies the topic
After listening to my speech	my classmates will be able to	determine (informative action)	when to consider purchasing organic foods over inorganic foods.
After listening to my speech	my classmates will be able to	explain (informative action)	why the cost of college textbooks is a problem.
After listening to my speech	my peers will be able to	describe	how to be successful in a job interview
After listening to my speech	my classmates will be able to	list	the steps to improve their credit score
After listening to my speech	my classmates will be able to	identify	the type of dog that would be suitable for their needs
After listening to my speech	my classmates will be able to	list	ways to protect themselves from identity theft

Analyzing Persuasive Specific Purpose Statements for Problem-Solution Speeches

Starts with “After listening to my speech	Identifies the audience	Incorporate A VERB that names an observable, measurable action that the audience can take at the end of the speech	Identifies the topic
After listening to my speech	my classmates	will take action to	prevent cheating in college
After listening to my speech	my classmates	will take steps to	eliminate human trafficking
After listening to my speech	my peers	will agree that	stricter gun control laws should be implemented
After listening to my speech	my classmates	will sign the online pledge to	stop texting while driving
After listening to my speech	my classmates	will quit or no longer engage in	binge drinking
After listening to my speech	my classmates	will advocate for	harsher punishment for people who engage in or facilitate prescription drug abuse.