



chapter 4

Selecting a Topic & Purpose

Brainstorming

**Generating
ideas by free
association of
words**



General Purpose

Broad goal of speech

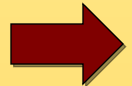
Specific Purpose

- **Single infinitive phrase**
- **States what speaker hopes to accomplish**



Specific Purpose Guidelines

- **Full infinitive phrase**
- **Statement, not question**
- **Avoid figurative language**



Specific Purpose Guidelines

- **Limit to one distinct idea**
- **Avoid being vague**

Full Infinitive Phrase

Ineffective: **Calendars**



Full Infinitive Phrase

More Effective: **To inform my audience
about the four major
kinds of calendars used
in the world today.**

Statement, Not Question

Ineffective:

What is Día de los Muertos?



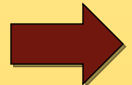
Statement, Not Question

More Effective: **To inform my audience about the history of Mexico's Día de los Muertos celebration.**

Avoid Figurative Language

Ineffective:

To persuade my audience that campus policy on student parking really stinks.



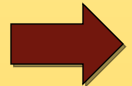
Avoid Figurative Language

More Effective: **To persuade my audience that the campus policy on student parking should be revised to provide more spaces for students before 5 p.m.**

One Distinct Idea

Ineffective:

To persuade my audience to become literacy tutors and to donate time to the Special Olympics.



One Distinct Idea

More Effective: **To persuade my audience to become literacy tutors.**

More Effective: **To persuade my audience to donate time to the Special Olympics.**

Avoid Being Vague

Ineffective: **To persuade my audience that something should be done about medical care.**

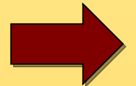


Avoid Being Vague

More Effective: **To persuade my audience that the federal government should adopt a system of national health insurance for all people in the United States.**

Specific Purpose Questions

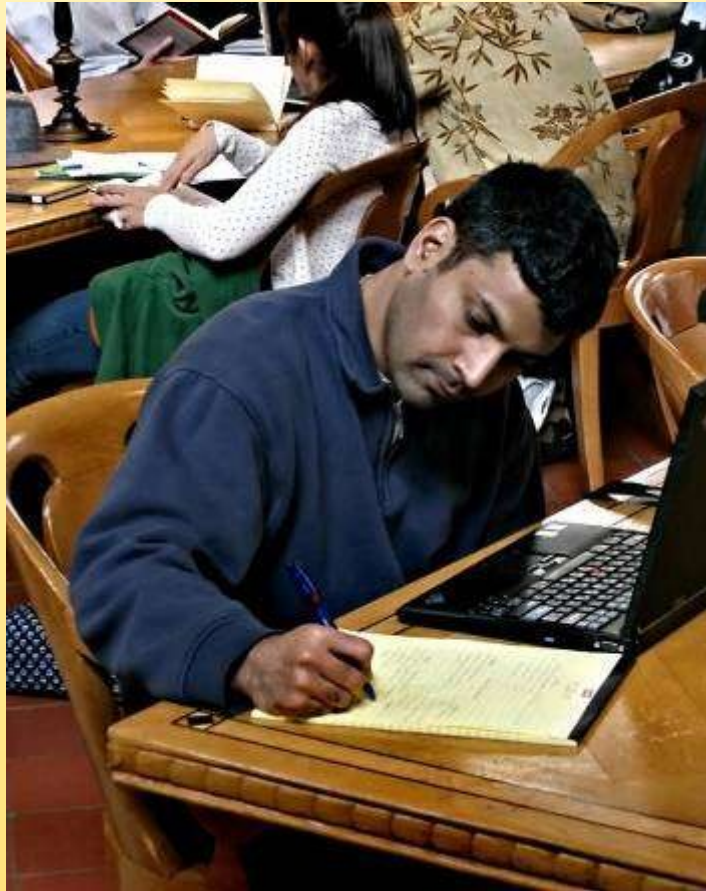
- **Does purpose meet assignment?**
- **Can I accomplish purpose in time allotted?**
- **Is purpose relevant to audience?**



Specific Purpose Questions

- **Is purpose too trivial for audience?**
- **Is purpose too technical for audience?**

Central Idea



- **One-sentence statement**
- **Encapsulate major ideas of speech**

Central Idea Guidelines

- **Express as full sentence**
- **Don't express as question**
- **Avoid figurative language**
- **Don't be vague**

Complete Sentence

Ineffective: **Problems of fad diets.**



Complete Sentence

More Effective: **Fad diets can lead to serious health problems by creating deficiencies in vitamins and minerals and by breaking down muscle tissue as well as fat.**

Statement, Not Question

Ineffective: **What are nanorobots?**



Statement, Not Question

More Effective: **Microscopic in size, nanorobots are being developed for use in medicine, weaponry, and daily life.**

Avoid Figurative Language

Ineffective: **Mexico's Yucatan peninsula is an awesome place for a vacation.**



Avoid Figurative Language

More Effective: **Mexico's Yucatan peninsula has many attractions, including a warm climate, excellent food, and extensive Mayan ruins.**

Avoid Being Vague

Ineffective: **Paying college athletes a salary is a good idea.**



Avoid Being Vague

More Effective: **The NCAA should allow athletes in revenue producing sports to receive a \$250 monthly salary as part of their scholarships.**

Example Outline

General Purpose: **To inform**

Specific Purpose: **To inform my audience of the three major races in alpine skiing.**

Central Idea: **The three major races in alpine skiing are the downhill, slalom, and giant slalom.**



Example Outline

- Main Points:
- **The first major race in alpine skiing is the downhill.**
 - **The second major race in alpine skiing is the slalom.**
 - **The third major race in alpine skiing is the giant slalom.**