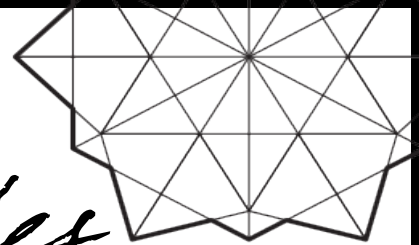


# SPEAKING

## Introduction Styles



◆◆ **THE ‘SUMMARY’ INTRODUCTION** *The summary introduction is the most efficient and direct way to start your presentation. It tells the audience what topics you intend to cover, as well as how you intend to go about it.*

*This type of introduction isn't the best choice for you if your goal is to captivate the audience with a memorable or creative INTRODUCTION, however it is a great choice when you want to be straightforward and clear.*

◆◆ **THE ‘SELF-INTRODUCTION’ INTRODUCTION** *This type of introduction is not common, but sometimes you will need to introduce yourself at the very beginning of a talk. If someone else is introducing you, I highly recommend providing them with a pre-written introduction that shares your experience, establishes your credibility, and helps create common ground with your audience.*

*First, your self-introduction should create meaning for your audience, not seek to be a comprehensive listing of your résumé. Try to weave your experiences into a narrative that places your life's work into context: the struggles you endured, a moment of unexpected discovery, or the biggest misperception people have about your occupation.*

*Second, be humble. Since listing one's accomplishments can come across as boastful, it's helpful to introduce a degree of humility.*

◆◆ **THE ‘STATEMENT’ OF INTENT INTRODUCTION** *This introduction style is a variant of the summary introduction, but the statement of intent places a greater emphasis on your end goal, or what you hope to achieve by the end of your speech. Declaring your goal from the beginning of your speech allows you to send a clear message to your audience about what you hope to achieve—whether you're asking them to learn a new technique, embrace a new idea, or buy whatever it is you are selling.*

◆◆ **THE ‘ANALYTICAL ANECDOTE’ INTRODUCTION** *These types of introductions include a first- or third-person anecdotes, but generally include additional detail or provide a deeper level of analysis than the anecdotal introduction. When you open with an analytical anecdote introduction, it should be directly tie into your larger point or be used as a direct parallel to your company's current situation.*

◆◆ **THE ‘AUDIENCE BENEFIT’ INTRODUCTION** *This type of introduction is so important—and should be present in so many of your talks—that it deserves its own page. The audience benefit alludes to the importance of identifying the benefits your audience will receive while hearing you speak. Ask yourself, “Why should my audience care about this? What is in this for them?” People tend to want the same overlying things...Meaningful friendships and romantic relationships, gratifying family time, career advancement, plenty of free time to relax and pursue interests, and financial security...so dig into what you can provide them and tell them right from the beginning so they are invested.*



❖ **THE ‘QUOTE’ INTRODUCTION** *Beginning a presentation by quoting an expert can help bolster your argument from the very start. An “expert” can mean anyone that the majority of the audience is sure to know—an inventor like Thomas Edison, or a former President like Bill Clinton.*

❖ **THE ‘SIMILARITY’ INTRODUCTION** *There are many ways to establish common ground, but any sincere expression of similarity—shared experience, goals, or interests—can help bind a speaker to an audience.*

❖ **THE ‘FEEDBACK’ INTRODUCTION** *What better way to show the audience how they should feel about something, than by telling them how others have felt about it before! Feedback can come from anywhere. You can quote from evaluations from past presentations, a tweet about your product, your company’s Facebook page, your website, an email, or a blogger’s review. It can also be effective to read a short series of comments, perhaps some tweets*

❖ **THE ‘RELEVANT’ INTRODUCTION** *If you find yourself speaking to an audience that questions whether your topic is relevant to their lives, you might begin with an intro that makes it crystal clear why this subject is pertinent.*

❖ **THE ‘CONTRASTING’ INTRODUCTION** *Contrasts, which highlight the differences between at least two things, offer a lot of options for beginning your presentation. Several types of contrasts can effectively set up the flow of your presentation*

*Problem vs. solution: What is the problem, and what solutions can fix it?*

*Failure vs. success: What does failure have to do with the definition of success*

*Obstacle vs. opportunity: What barriers are standing in your way, and how can you get around them?*

*These vs those: How are these ideas or products different from one another, and what do those differences mean for us, you, or our customers?*

*Pros and cons: What are the pros and cons of a particular concept or approach?*

*Needs vs. wants: What do you need in order to succeed, and what is inessential but on your “wish” list?*

*Possible vs. impossible: What can and cannot be accomplished?*



- ❖ **THE 'YOU'RE SPECIAL' INTRODUCTION** *Everyone likes to be made to feel special, so lavishing praise onto your audience can lead them to loving and listening to you immediately. But beware, this type of introduction can be tricky, since praise can come across as an obvious and insincere attempt to win over the audience.*
- ❖ **THE 'ANECDOTAL' INTRODUCTION** *There are few ways to begin a presentation more effectively than by sharing a compelling first-person story or experience.*
- ❖ **THE 'STORYTIME' INTRODUCTION** *A fable is a short story, usually told through animals, that contains a moral lesson at the end. "The Tortoise and the Hare," one of Aesop's Fables, is a classic example. The tortoise, slower but steadier, reaches the finish line first and wins. It's easy to see how that story could parallel many real-life competitive situations.*
- ❖ **THE 'OMG MOMENT' INTRODUCTION** *People are inevitably drawn to stories about an "light bulb" or "OMG" moment. Capture their attention by telling the story of how you suddenly landed upon a profound insight, or how you experienced a moment of clarity that provided you with better direction about how to live your life or pursue your goals. Sharing your OMG moment might help lead them to their own!*
- ❖ **THE 'TO-DO' INTRODUCTION** *Beginning a presentation with an activity can work well for training workshops where you teaching a specific skill. Beyond getting the audience engaged immediately, beginning with an activity to do can also increase buy-in, particularly if audience members struggle with parts of the activity.*
- ❖ **THE 'STATISTICAL' INTRODUCTION** *When people hear the term statistics, they generally think in terms of numbers and data. But most raw numbers don't stick unless they're set within a more meaningful context....add a surprise statistic in your introduction so it sticks out to your audience.*

❖ **THE ‘SELF-EFFACING HUMOR’ INTRODUCTION** *Self-effacing humor is often considered one of the “safest” forms of humor, since the target of the joke is the speaker him- or herself. Most comedians will tell you that you have to make fun of yourself before you can start making jokes about others, so use this type of humor to get the audience on your side and not alienate them.*

❖ **THE ‘TEASE’ INTRODUCTION** *News anchors are experts at keeping viewers tuned into their programs by tossing in a ‘tease’ before commercial breaks. This is always a compelling tidbit intended to hook people and prevent them from flipping to a different station.*

❖ **THE ‘DRAMATIC’ INTRODUCTION** *A cliffhanger is a dramatic plot twist typically used at the end of a piece of fiction—a book, television show, or film—to hook the audience enough to return for the follow-up episode.*

❖ **THE ‘TRENDING’ INTRODUCTION** *If you can tie in a trending pop culture moment, or anything currently being talked about on a variety of media platforms, then by all means do it! Use that controversial film or an odd speech delivered by an actor at an awards ceremony, an unusual art exhibit, a celebrity whose face seems to be plastered on every magazine cover, an unusual fashion trend, or an Internet “meme” that went viral.*

❖ **THE ‘PERSONAL’ INTRODUCTION** *Audiences tend to like presenters who are willing to reveal something of themselves. This does NOT mean oversharing, but it does mean you should embrace the opportunity to share your own personal connection with your material. Get personal and tell the audience why/how you got involved with your topic, how a product improved your life, or what you learned from a failure.*

❖ **THE ‘EVENTS IN HISTORY’ INTRODUCTION** *If you do an online search for the date of your presentation alongside a phrase such as “events in history,” you’ll come up with countless webpages listing events that occurred on that date. You could get lucky & find something that offers a perfect link to your presentation topic. Instead of simply citing “this day in history” factoids and moving on, use them to draw a parallel to current events, as a larger metaphor.*

❖❖ **THE ‘TIME TRAVEL’ INTRODUCTION** The “time travel” introduction is where you metaphorically transport an audience from the room in which they’re sitting to another place or time. This introduction works particularly well for scientific or location-based presentations. It can be used by an astronomer to discuss a “visit” to the moon, a civil rights activist who wants you to hear the sounds from the midst of a riot, or a modern-day explorer who hiked his way across Antarctica.

❖❖ **THE ‘RHETORICAL QUESTION’ INTRODUCTION** You might be surprised that rhetorical questions are able to actively engage audience members, but many will be quietly contemplating their responses to your important question as they listen to you speak. For that reason, pause for a moment or two after posing a rhetorical question to allow it to sink in.

❖❖ **THE ‘HYPOTHETICAL’ INTRODUCTION** The hypothetical question introduction is similar to the rhetorical question introduction, and forces members of your audience to make a decision. Both of these introductions help to turn a passive audience experience into a more active one. Examples of hypothetical questions include: “If you had two years left to live, what would you want to do?” “If you suddenly became rich, would you continue to work?”

❖❖ **THE ‘IMAGINE THIS’ INTRODUCTION** Use an ‘imagine this’ introduction to get your audience in the moment and actively participating in your presentation right from the beginning.

