

# Beneficial Bacteria



## COMMENTARY

Stating your specific purpose and central idea as separate units before the text of the outline makes it easier to judge how well you have constructed the outline to achieve your purpose and to communicate your central idea.

Labeling the introduction marks it as a distinct section that plays a special role in the speech.

The opening gets attention and, as it progresses, reveals the topic of the speech.

Here the speaker establishes his credibility and previews the main points to be discussed in the body.

Including transitions ensures that the speaker has worked out how to connect one idea to the next. Notice that the transition is not included in the system of symbolization and indentation used for the rest of the speech.

Labeling the body marks it as a distinct part of the speech.

Main point I is phrased as a full sentence. The three subpoints of main point I are shown by the capital letters A, B, and C and are also written in full sentences to ensure that the speaker has thought them out fully.



## OUTLINE

*Specific Purpose:* To inform my audience about the role of beneficial bacteria in our bodies and in the environment.

*Central Idea:* Beneficial bacteria are crucial to human health and to the health of our environment.

### **Introduction**

- I. Hold up your hand and look closely.
  - A. You can't see them, but millions of creatures—bacteria—are living there.
  - B. You've been taught to scrub off those bacteria in the sink.
  - C. That's fine advice—but only up to a point.
- II. The truth is that most bacteria are not something to be washed away.
- III. Dr. Martin Blaser states in his book *Missing Microbes* that bacteria are vital to human life and to the world in general.
- IV. I learned about the importance of bacteria in my biology class, and I did additional research for this speech.
- V. Today, I'd like to inform you about some of the ways beneficial bacteria help our bodies and our environment.

*(Transition:* Let's start by looking at the beneficial bacteria inside us.)

### **Body**

- I. Beneficial bacteria play a crucial role in our bodies.
  - A. All of us have had bacteria on—and in—our bodies since we were born.
    1. As stated in *Scientific American*, the human body is "a complex ecosystem . . . containing trillions of bacteria."
    2. Each square centimeter of your skin is home to as many as 100,000 bacteria.

The progressive indentation shows visually the relationships among main points, subpoints, and sub-subpoints.

Points below the level of subpoint are indicated by Arabic numerals and lowercase letters. Sometimes they are not written as full sentences. Check to see what your instructor prefers.

The transition shows how the speaker will get from main point I to main point II.

Like main point I, main point II is phrased as a full sentence.

Notice the pattern of subordination in this section. Subpoint B states that beneficial bacteria can combat pollution. Sub-subpoint 2 notes that bacteria can help clean up oil spills. Because items a and b expand upon the point about oil spills, they are subordinated to it.

Labeling the conclusion marks it as a distinct part of the speech.

Summarizing the main points is standard procedure in an informative speech.

The speaker's closing quotation reinforces his central idea.

3. There are more than 100 different kinds of bacteria in your mouth.
  4. Overall, there are 10 times more bacteria in your body than there are human cells.
- B. One positive function of bacteria is to help us digest food and maintain our body weight.
1. Yogurt is famous for its positive bacteria.
  2. Other foods high in positive bacteria include sauerkraut, kefir, kimchi, and some soft cheeses.
- C. According to the *British Journal of Nutrition*, bacteria help our bodies in other ways as well.
1. They strengthen our immune systems by helping cells divide and reproduce.
  2. They promote healthy organs by synthesizing the enzymes needed for vitamins.
  3. Perhaps most important, they help create the energy we need to live.

(*Transition:* Just as important as the bacteria in our bodies are the bacteria in the world around us.)

- II. Beneficial bacteria play a crucial role in our environment.
- A. The Web site for the master gardener program at Colorado State University notes that healthy soil is “a dynamic living ecosystem.”
1. In every cup of soil, you’ll find some 200 million bacteria.
  2. These bacteria help produce nutrients in the soil that allow plants to grow.
  3. In other words, a good garden requires good bacteria.
- B. In addition to enriching the soil, bacteria play an important role in combatting pollution.
1. As a natural part of the environment, bacteria reduce contaminants in lakes, rivers, and oceans.
  2. Scientists are now using bacteria to help clean up oil spills.
    - a. Remember the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico a few years ago?
    - b. A recent article in *U.S. News and World Report* states that bacteria released by scientists ate through a significant portion of the oil.
  3. Some bacteria can even eat through discarded plastic and radioactive waste.

### **Conclusion**

- I. While bacteria can be dangerous, many are so beneficial that life as we know it could not survive without them.
- II. The health of our bodies and the health of our environment both depend on beneficial bacteria.
- III. In the words of award-winning science writer Richard Conniff, we should see bacteria “not as enemies, but as intimate partners” in our journey through life.

This is the final bibliography. It lists the sources actually used in writing the speech and is shorter than the preliminary bibliography compiled in the early stages of research. (See Chapter 7 for a discussion of the preliminary bibliography.)

This bibliography follows the Modern Language Association (MLA) format. Check with your instructor to see what format you should use for your bibliography.

## Bibliography

- Ackerman, Jennifer. "The Ultimate Social Network." *Scientific American* June 2012: 36–43. Print.
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- Conniff, Richard. "The Body Eclectic: You're Not Just Human." *Smithsonian Magazine* May 2013: 40. Print.
- Koebler, Jason. "Study: Oil-Eating Bacteria Mitigated Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill." *U.S. News & World Report* 8 Apr. 2013. Web. 7 Apr. 2014.
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