



## Beginning and Ending a Speech

The serial-position effect suggests that we are most likely to remember the first and last items in a series. It is important to start and end your speeches with impact, as those pieces of your speech are crucial to your audience's engagement with and recollection of your message.

Instead of starting your speech with "hello, my name is..." and ending with "thanks, that's all," your audience will be more impressed if you begin your speech with an attention-getter and end with a wow statement. Powerful attention-getters and wow statements could be **references to your audience, statistics, stories, quotes, rhetorical questions, analogies, life lessons, bold statements**, or anything else that is relevant to your topic and will start and leave your audience thinking.

Another effective strategy in public speaking is to link your attention-getter to your wow statement for a cohesive presentation. Below are some examples:

### Statistic

**Attention-Getter:** "In 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that 27% of adults in the United States have a disability of some type. Look around the room and think about that. That is more than one in four people."

**Wow Statement:** "Remember, one in four people. If you're like me and have a disability, whether it's apparent or not, you're not alone."

### Story

**Attention-Getter:** "I was standing on the side of the road, looking at my phone, when suddenly, BAM! I was face down on the pavement. I got hit by a biker."

**Wow Statement:** "When I was hit by that biker, we could have been hurt much worse. Learn from my mistake, and don't let your phone be a danger to you or others."

### Quote

**Attention-Getter:** "'If you don't get out there and define yourself, you'll be quickly and inaccurately defined by others.' This is a quote from Michelle Obama's memoir published in 2018, titled *Becoming*."

**Wow Statement:** "To leave you with one more quote from Michelle Obama's memoir, 'Your story is what you have, what you will always have. It is something to own.'"

### Need more information or assistance?

Schedule an appointment with the [Excel Multiliteracy Center](http://multiliteracy.uccs.edu). We are here to provide one-on-one and group assistance to any and all UCCS students!