



# Forget the Middle

## Bookend Your Speech Like a Pro

Middle children are said to bemoan a neglected existence, the middle seat is universally recognized as the worst option, and even the Thesaurus equates middling with “mediocre,” “run-of-the-mill,” and “so-so.”

With apologies to Oreo cookies, bullseye and expressive fingers, you should follow suit in preparing your next presentation and ruthlessly ignore the middle.

It sounds counter-intuitive, since the middle of a presentation typically takes up the most real-estate, but **focusing on your first and last impression is a better writing strategy**. The secret is that if you do it right, the middle will write itself. The “meatiest” part of a presentation lands squarely in your wheelhouse anyhow, so as long as you keep it interesting, your natural comfort and conversational tone will more readily come through.

The first and last impressions, on the other hand, require a bit more finesse. Check out the tips below to help you bookend your speech like a pro.



### OPENING



**Hook the Audience** – Remember, this is a performance, and the more you help an audience visualize your topic, the more it will resonate. Surprising facts, powerful questions – something should grab them immediately. Bring your topic to life.



**Inject Your True Self** – Personal stories resonate and the audience can tell whether you’re being your genuine self. Let them know your authentic self straight out of the gate. Metaphors will help underscore your ideas, but people want to feel like they know you.



**Preview the Road Ahead** – Previewing your speech is like a verbal contract. Done properly, it will excite the audience and bolster your credibility as the speech continues.



**Airtight Theme** – You do have one, right? A concise elevator pitch that describes what you’re talking about? All of the above should be tied together by it.

## CLOSING



**Hit the Homerun** – Drive home your biggest point as you wrap. You know the one: that statistic or revolutionary idea or lightbulb moment that pumps you up. The part that excites you most will be most exciting to them too. Share it and share it BIG.



**Review the Road Behind** – Take a look back at your opening statements, employ another correlated quote or a repetitive close that will best drive home your biggest point. You told the audience where you were headed and now you're here. Make it count.



**Thank You** – The audience gave you its most valuable commodity: time. Thank them for it.

### WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS:

**Tell the audience what you'll talk about.**

**Talk about it.**

**Tell them what you talked about.**

Simple, right?

Want to learn more performance tips and techniques like this? Give the MOXiE Institute a call. We'll develop a custom plan to capitalize on your existing strengths and sharpen your edges wherever necessary.

**Talk is cheap, performance is priceless.**