THE PREPARATION GUIDE FOR THE PROBLEM-SOLUTION OUTLINE

Introduction: (consists of 2 parts, first an attention step, then a clarification step, including a clear preview.)

Attention Step: Usually an example or a couple of brief examples that demonstrate the nature of the problem. Include a source cite after giving the example(s).

Clarification Step: May include several elements: a brief statement from a qualified source that there is a serious problem, a brief statement about the seriousness of the problem from a qualified source. This statement may act as a thesis. You will also want include any direct connection you have to the problem. This could enhance your credibility. Include your persuasive proposition at this point.

Preview: A preview that specifies the major points in your speech.

Body: (While other forms may be acceptable, the body usually has two Major points. The first argument develops the problem (size, harms, causes), and the second argument develops a solution. These points are necessarily unbalanced. The problem will form 2/3rd of the body and the solution will form 1/3rd.)

I. ____________________ is a serious problem.

   A. The problem is large. (It is necessary to overcome the presumption that we don’t have to act to solve the problem. Several types of statistical arguments may be used to demonstrate the scope of the problem and to demonstrate a need to attend to the problem before it affects your audience. Sources should be drawn from a variety of qualified sources to increase credibility)

      1. Estimates from reliable sources
      2. Problem is increasing
      3. A trend is apparent
      4. Ratio (number of people in a given area, in this class, etc.)
      5. Frequency of problem (# of times per year, hour, during this speech, etc.)
      6. Localization
         (Remember, you don’t have to use all of these. Just establish size.)

   Transition Statement

      B. The problem is harmful. (It is not enough to show the problem is large. You also need to demonstrate the loss of things we consider to be good. This will also demonstrate to your audience that they should act to prevent these harms from happening to them or to people they value. Most of the proof here should be supported with examples. This is where you become the storyteller to develop pathos.)

      1. Examples demonstrating physical harms
      2. Examples demonstrating psychological harms
      3. Examples demonstrating monetary harms
      4. Examples demonstrating social harms
      5. Examples demonstrating environmental harms

         (Again, you do not need all of these, but you DO need to humanize the statistics and show us what we stand to lose if we fail to act.)
Problem-Solution Speech (cont.)

Transition Statement

C. We are failing to solve the problem. (This point is necessary due to our belief that we do not need to act because someone else is taking care of it. We need to demonstrate that the problem will not go away unless we act. This section also allows us to examine what may be the causes of the problem or to examine barriers to overcoming the problem.)

1. Our failure to solve is rooted in poor laws. (some, not all.)
   a. no laws apply
   b. laws have not caught up with technology
   c. laws are weak
   d. laws are not enforced
   e. laws form patchwork of jurisdiction
   f. laws act as a disincentive
   g. laws allow for self-regulation
   h. laws have been co-opted by special interests
   i. laws need updating

2. Our failure to solve is rooted in poor attitudes.
   a. ignorance
   b. apathy
   c. evil

Transition Statement: (This is a good time to do an internal summary to prepare the audience for the solution.)

II. We can solve the problem of ________________________.

A. A change in policy will work.
   1. Change laws
   2. Change educational process
   3. Demonstrate workability through examples

B. Policy change will only work if we change our attitudes and act individually.
   1. personal steps to take to solve the problem
   2. recommendation of ways we can change our attitudes and the attitudes of others

Conclusion: This needs to include a few elements: a specific review of your major points, a restatement of your thesis as well as going back to the intro example to demonstrate change. Close with a strong clincher.