

# Examine Meeting Procedures



**SECTION: 1 IDENTIFY TYPES OF MEETINGS**

**SECTION: 2 EXAMINE HOW TO ORGANIZE MEETINGS**

**SECTION: 3 EXAMINE HOW TO FACILITATE MEETINGS**

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## SECTION 1 IDENTIFY TYPES OF MEETINGS

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### TYPES OF MEETINGS

There are many types of meetings, such as two friends meeting over coffee or a session of the House of Commons. The two types of meetings that will be described here are the ones used most often within the Cadet Program: briefings and committee meetings.

#### BRIEFING

A briefing is a type of meeting used to convey what needs to be done during an exercise or to inform the participants of an activity and of the necessary details. There is little input from the group except asking clarifying questions.

**Briefing.** A meeting for delivering information or instructions.



As a cadet, a briefing is the most common type of meeting you would be expected to facilitate.

As a cadet, there are two types of briefings you may be asked to facilitate:

- **Information briefing.** The information briefing is intended to inform the listeners and to gain their understanding. The briefing deals primarily with facts. The briefer provides a brief introduction to define the subject and to orient the listener and then presents the information.
- **Staff briefing.** The staff briefing is intended to secure a coordinated or unified effort. This may involve the exchange of information, the making / announcement of decisions, the issuance of directives, or the presentation of guidance. The staff briefing may include characteristics of an information briefing.

#### Functions of a Briefing

A briefing needs to be clear, concise, and complete. It needs to be tailored to its audience; a briefing for the activity leaders of an exercise is different from the one you would give to the cadets participating in the exercise.

- **Communicating the overall plan.** Explain how the exercise will be carried out. Always include safety details that affect the whole exercise (eg, fire orders, muster points, first aid personnel, and boundaries). All team members should know what is involved. This may include identifying various stages and phases.
- **Communicating the tasks involved in the leadership appointment.** Explain the tasks involved within the exercise.
- **Assigning tasks to team members as applicable.** Assign team members tasks that must be completed within the scope of the exercise. Every team member should be actively engaged in a meaningful activity.
- **Ensuring the team members understand their tasks.** Confirm team members understand their tasks and ask the team members if they have any questions. The team leader should also ask questions of various team members to ensure comprehension. When team members are assigned specific tasks, it is important they understand what is expected of them.



Think about questions you could ask or actions you could take to ensure everyone has understood their tasks.

## COMMITTEE MEETING

A committee meeting is used to plan and organize an exercise. Members' participation is necessary for this type of meeting to be successful.

**Committee meeting.** A group of people, nominally up to 12 members, headed by a chairperson, meeting for discussion and debate on subjects relevant to its members.



Now that you know that members' participation is necessary in a committee meeting, how would you ensure maximum participation in your meeting?

During your time in cadets, most of the meetings you have attended were briefings. Younger cadets have little input in the planning and organization of the activities in which they participate. As you have progressed through the Cadet Program, the tasks that you have been assigned to complete have progressed from leading a small group of cadets in setting up a classroom to leading a flight on parade.

### Functions of a Committee Meeting

Meetings fulfill many functions for the team. The functions of a meeting include:

- defining the team;
- providing an opportunity where the team revises, updates, and adds to what it knows as a team;
- helping everyone to understand the collective aim of the team and the way in which their work contributes to the team's success;
- creating a commitment to the decisions it makes and the objectives it pursues; and
- creating an occasion where the team physically exists and works **as a group**, and the only time when the leader is the leader of the team and not just a person to whom individuals are responsible to.

### Objective(s) of a Meeting

There are many reasons to have meetings. As part of Proficiency Level Five you will participate in meetings to create proposals and prepare / conduct / conclude exercises as part of PO 503 (Lead Cadet Activities). Here are some meeting objectives:

- **Legislative framework.** The objective of the meeting is to clarify the organizational makeup of the team; its rules, routines and procedures (eg, who is responsible to whom, how problems should be addressed, what tasks need to be completed) through which all action takes place.
- **Executive responsibilities.** The objective of the meeting is to determine who will be responsible for what tasks. Each member sees what others are doing and also understands how their roles / responsibilities fit into the whole project / exercise.
- **Constructive / originative.** The objective of the meeting is to guide a discussion where the knowledge, experience, judgment and ideas of the team are used to come up with or think through a proposal, project, exercise, etc.
- **Informative / digestive.** The objective of the meeting includes progress reports—to keep the team up-to-date on the current status of the tasks—and a review of the completed project to see what can be learned for the next time (eg, a meeting used to determine details of an After Action Report).

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## SECTION 2 EXAMINE HOW TO ORGANIZE MEETINGS

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### HOW TO ORGANIZE A BRIEFING

To organize your briefing, you will need the complete activity or exercise plan. It should state the who, what, where and when of the briefing.



Tell them what **they** need to know, **not** all **you** know!

Organizing a briefing requires four steps:

1. **Analyze the situation.** This includes analyzing the audience and the occasion by determining:
  - Who is to be briefed and why?
  - How much knowledge of the subject does the audience have?
  - What is expected of the briefer?
2. **Construct the briefing.** The construction of the briefing will vary with its type and purpose. The analysis provides the basis for this determination. The following are the major steps in preparing a briefing:
  - a. Know the subject thoroughly.
  - b. Isolate the key points.
  - c. Arrange the key points in logical order.
  - d. Select visual aids, if required.
  - e. Establish the wording.
  - f. Rehearse before a knowledgeable person who can critique the briefing.
3. **Deliver the briefing.** A successful briefing is dependent on how it is presented. A confident delivery, clearly enunciated and obviously based on full knowledge of the subject helps convince the audience. The briefer maintains a relaxed, but professional bearing using natural gestures and movement, but avoiding distracting mannerisms. The delivery is characterized by conciseness, objectivity, and accuracy. The briefer must be aware of the following:
  - The basic purpose is to present the subject as directed and to ensure that it is understood by the audience.
  - Brevity precludes a lengthy introduction or summary.
  - Interruptions and questions may occur at any point. If these interruptions occur, the briefer answers questions before proceeding or should indicate that questions will be answered later in the briefing. Do not permit questions to distract you from your planned briefing. If the question will be answered later in the briefing, the briefer should make specific reference to the earlier question when introducing that material. The briefer should anticipate possible questions and be prepared to answer them.
4. **Follow-up.** Ensure an understanding of the material. When the briefing is over, the briefer should elicit the opinion of a peer or superior for a critique.

## HOW TO WRITE A BRIEFING

The following is a format used when writing an information briefing.

### The Information Briefing

The information briefing should follow this format:

1. The introduction, to include:
  - a. greeting,
  - b. purpose and scope, to include:
    - (1) giving the big picture first; and
    - (2) explaining the purpose and scope of your briefing; and
  - c. outline or procedure, to include:
    - (1) summarizing the key points and your general approach; and
    - (2) explaining any special procedures (eg, demonstrations).
2. The body, to include:
  - a. arranging the main points in a logical sequence;
  - b. using visual aids to emphasize your main points;
  - c. planning effective transitions from one main point to the next; and
  - d. being prepared to answer questions at any time.
3. The closing, to include:
  - a. asking for questions;
  - b. summarizing the key points and making a concluding statement; and
  - c. announcing what will be happening next.

### What to Consider When Writing a Staff Briefing

The staff briefing should include:

1. **General.** The staff briefing is an information briefing presented to the staff who are leading the activities or responsible for completing tasks for the exercise.
2. **Purposes of a staff briefing.** Give specific instructions, if required. The staff briefing serves to:
  - issue or elaborate on the exercise plan;
  - instill a general appreciation of the exercise;
  - review the key points of the exercise plan; and
  - ensure participants know the exercise's objective(s), problems that may arise, and ways to overcome them.
3. **Format.** A staff briefing is normally informal and has no set format.



**Activate Your Brain #1:**

What are the four steps when organizing a briefing?

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**HOW TO ORGANIZE A MEETING**

During EO M503.02 (Prepare an Exercise), a basic procedure on how to plan a pre-exercise meeting was described. The following (more formal and detailed) procedures on how to organize and facilitate a meeting are from *Robert's Rules of Order: Newly Revised in Brief*, more commonly known as Robert's Rules of Order.



**Did you know?**

When Henry Martyn Robert (an officer in the United States Army) was asked to preside over a church meeting, he realized he did not know how. He tried anyway and his embarrassment was supreme. This event, which may seem familiar to many, left him determined never to attend another meeting until he knew something about parliamentary law. He studied the books that were available on the subject, but soon realized that every part of the United States had differing ideas of the correct procedure. To bring order to the chaos, he decided to write *Robert's Rules of Order* (first published in 1876) which quickly became the most commonly used procedures for facilitating meetings in the country.

**Duties of the Chairperson**

It is the responsibility of the chairperson for all planning for a meeting, which includes:

- setting the timings for the meeting;
- creating the agenda;
- running the meeting;
- supervising debate;
- conducting any voting; and
- creating the minutes.

**Setting the Timings for the Meeting**

Team members shall be notified of meetings as soon as possible to allow the meeting to be more productive and allow all members to express their concerns.

**Creating the Agenda**

Every meeting must first be convened. This process should begin with an agenda. The most critical priority for a meeting must always be to avoid wasting members' time. An effective agenda is the best tool for that purpose.

The agenda structures the order of business for a meeting and is a guide for attendees to follow. When setting the agenda, think of it as a set of rules for a good meeting.

The agenda must provide the organization's name, the date, time and place of the meeting. It should also give a finish time and, where possible, an approximate time for each item, so that the chairperson can keep an effective rein on the meeting by using the time framework.

Standard agenda items and their suggested order are:

1. confirmation of the minutes from the previous meeting;
2. matters arising from the previous minutes (any matter that was raised at the previous meeting which needed follow-up action on a carried motion);
3. correspondence in and out;
4. reports (these could be from the team's various departments); and
5. general business (brief background information on agenda topics as required).

The chairperson can vary the order of business at the meeting if the meeting members agree.



An agenda is more effective if given to the members before the meeting rather than at the meeting.

### **Running the Meeting**

All business is brought before the assembly in the form of a motion. Before members can make a motion or address the assembly they must obtain the floor using the following protocol:

1. The members will raise their hand and wait to be recognized.
2. The chairperson is addressed by title, "Mr. Speaker" or "Madame Speaker".
3. The member introducing a motion has the first right to the floor.
4. Members who have not spoken to a motion shall have precedence over those who have.
5. The chairperson must recognize any member who seeks the floor while entitled to it.
6. Before a motion is open to debate it must (if required) be seconded and stated by the Speaker after which it is open to debate.
7. All important motions and amendments shall be in writing.
8. After the Speaker has stated a motion it is the property of the assembly and can only be withdrawn with unanimous consent or permission of the assembly.

### **Debate**

Speeches shall conform to the following rules:

- Maximum speech length, as determined by assembly, will be respected.
- Decorum in debate will be maintained, to include:
  - remarks must be confined to the merits of the pending question;
  - attacks on a member's motives are not allowed;
  - all remarks must be addressed through the chairperson;

- the use of members' names will be avoided;
  - refrain from speaking against one's own motion;
  - stop speaking during an interruption by the chairperson; and
  - refrain from disturbing the assembly.
- The chairperson is not to take part in the debate.
  - When possible, the chairperson shall alternate the debate between those for and those against the motion.

### Voting

Voting, if required, shall conform to the following rules:

- Procedures for voting shall be as the chairperson suggests.
- A member can change their vote until the time that the result is announced.
- A straw poll (an unofficial ballot taken as a test of opinion) is not in order for official purposes; a formal vote is required.



#### ***Did you know?***

For a vote to be valid, a quorum must exist.

**Quorum.** The fixed minimum number of members that must be present to make the proceedings of an assembly, society, or meeting valid.

### Creating the Minutes

**Minutes.** A brief summary of the proceedings of a meeting.

Minutes should be taken by someone other than the chairperson. This allows the chairperson to concentrate on facilitating the meeting. Minutes shall contain enough information to:

- maintain an accurate historical account of a meeting held; and
- allow for a clear understanding of the business that was conducted for those present and not present.

As a guideline, minutes should contain the following information:

- name of body, associated office, department or organization;
- date, time and location of the meeting;
- the list of attendees, guests and regrets (including the chairperson, and recording secretary);



**Regrets.** Expressing polite apologies for not being able to attend a meeting.

Members who cannot attend the meeting contact the chairperson with their reasons. The chairperson informs the recording secretary of those members who have sent regrets to distinguish them from members who did not contact the chairperson about their absence.



- a record of all motions that were presented;
- a clear distinction between open and closed sections of the meeting;
- consecutively numbered pages (use a header with meeting name, date, and page number);
- time of adjournment; and
- list of titles of any reports presented during the meeting.



Principles for effective minute-taking:

- BEFORE the meeting:
  - If possible, meet with the chairperson to set the agenda.
  - Learn what is expected to be included in the meeting minutes.
  - Use the agenda to make an outline for recording purposes.
  - Make sure there is a backup recording tool (eg, if taking minutes using a laptop computer, having pen and paper available if there are problems).
  - Make an extra copy of the agenda and / or materials to bring to the meeting.
  - Read and review all meeting materials.
  - Prepare an attendance sheet (know who is expected to attend and who sent regrets).
- DURING the meeting:
  - When possible, sit next to the meeting chairperson.
  - Follow the sequence of the meeting using the agenda.
  - Listen actively.
  - Focus on documenting the main ideas, processes and outcomes.
  - Record all motions and results (if not clear on the wording, ask for the motion to be repeated).
- AFTER the meeting, compose the minutes as follows:
  - If needed, ask the chairperson for clarification on any issues discussed.
  - Draft the minutes as soon as possible, while everything is still fresh.
  - Include only factual and concise statements about each issue discussed.
  - Omit unnecessary details.
  - Record in the past tense and in the third person.
  - Proofread, and then have the chairperson proofread.
  - Ensure the minutes, and amendments if required, are available for approval at the next meeting.



**Activate Your Brain #2:**

What are the duties of the chairperson?

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## SECTION 3 EXAMINE HOW TO FACILITATE MEETINGS

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### FACILITATING THE MEETING

Remember the objective of the meeting and stay on track. The two most important things for this to happen are the agenda (for dealing with the subject) and the actions of the chairperson (for dealing with the people).

#### Dealing With the Subject

When planning the agenda, the placement or order of items to be discussed can be very helpful for dealing with the subject of the meeting.

For example, you could:

- place smaller items first on the agenda to build up a sense of success before dealing with the main item;
- place the main item first to ensure it is discussed, leaving the smaller items to be decided after or at another meeting; or
- place a contentious item last so it can not potentially disrupt the entire meeting.

#### Dealing With the People

Dealing with people is an important skill, especially when you are in a position of leadership. Chairpersons need to build trust between themselves and their followers. There are six critical areas:

- **Communication.** Must always be a two-way street.
- **Support.** Being approachable, helpful, and concerned, especially when things are not going well.
- **Respect.** A question of delegating authority and listening to what subordinates have to say.
- **Fairness.** Giving credit and assessing blame where they are due.
- **Predictability.** Being dependable and keeping promises.
- **Competence.** Knowing your own job and doing it well.

Leadership is influence and influence is exercised through communication. Like any skill, competent communication must be learned and developed over a lifetime. Communication skills permit the flow of ideas from one individual to another or to a group, and vice versa. The process of communication can include both verbal and non-verbal messages. Understanding the three styles of communication aids you when facilitating a meeting by knowing who to watch out for (aggressive), who to draw out (passive) and who to support (assertive).

The ability of the team to work during a meeting is determined by their ability to work together. This is the primary task of the chairperson. Your conduct, both verbal and non-verbal, will set the tone for the meeting.

### LEADERSHIP APPROACHES

There are three main leadership approaches discussed in the Cadet Program. They are:

- control,
- coach, and
- empower.

Each leadership approach is based on balancing the concern for the relationship with team members for the concern for accomplishing the goal(s) of the meeting.

All leadership approaches may be required when facilitating a meeting. You have to rely on your training and experience to help you decide which approach is best for a given situation.



As a chairperson, this can be the most difficult part in running a meeting. Often, getting everyone to participate can be a challenge.

## MEETINGS: WHAT CAN GO WRONG AND WHY

When you have a group of people together at a meeting, anything can happen. A **poorly** facilitated meeting quickly reinforces the idea that meetings are a waste of time. The following definitions describe how members may act / feel during meetings.

**Passivity.** The members are only attending because they have to. They feel that they have little to no input into the overall plan.

**Boring.** Most of the meeting has nothing to do with most of the members, so why are they here? The only part of the meeting that interests the member is theirs!

**People don't listen.** Listening is a skill and many people are poor listeners. This is understandable as people think faster than they can talk, creating down time for their brain; when listening to others the brain "fills" this down time between the speaker's words with their own thoughts. Another reason people don't listen is the subject; other members' ideas are not as good as theirs so why listen?

**Grandstanding.** Sometimes one or two members seem to dominate the discussion. This grandstanding has the effect of overwhelming the younger, less experienced and less aggressive members.

**The power of the leader.** It's hard to disagree with the leader. If you, as the chairperson, are seen as favouring one idea, the members are less likely to challenge / disagree with it.

**Foregone conclusions.** Members feel that a meeting is a waste of time if it appears the chairperson has already made a decision.

**Not useful.** Members' past experiences of finishing a meeting left them not sure exactly what was decided and what they are to do next. This gives them the opinion that the meeting was a waste of time.

**Fear of exposure.** If members talk about their ideas or express opinions, they expose themselves to public criticism. This can be devastating to a young person, especially when such criticism is done by someone they respect.

**Potential conflict.** Most people prefer to get along with others. When you disagree with someone, there is the potential for conflict. Members who disagree may feel isolated or unpopular and opt instead for the safety of silence. Also, some people enjoy provoking conflict and these people need to be watched out for.

**Prior relationships brought to the meeting.** Members who associate together are seen by other members as a clique. Such cliques are seen as supporting their own members, even over the good of the team. If there is more than one clique, there is a potential for rivalry to overshadow the meeting.

**Concern about consequences.** What will be required of the members when an idea is accepted? Will some members have to do more than others? What are the consequences of not being able to do my part? This anxiety can make attending a meeting a very unpleasant experience for some members.



Have you experienced any of the situations described above? What is your opinion about attending a meeting?

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### MEETINGS: WHY THEY ARE IMPORTANT

With all these problems is it even worth the effort to have meetings? Before you can make this decision, here are some of the reasons why meetings are important.

**Getting a sense of the whole.** So much work is done by individuals or small groups that it becomes vital for the team to see the big picture. This gives everyone a sense that their work is part of the plan, helping build morale and esprit de corps.

**Comparing notes.** By comparing notes, problems affecting one member may be solved by another member who had a similar problem.

**Sharing information.** Learning what others have done, hearing ways similar problems were solved, and being able to share something learned all builds toward a positive outcome for the meeting and the team.

**Being visible to each other.** Much of the team's work is done by individuals or small groups, so it can be difficult to actually be a team. Being together in a meeting allows the energy of the members to synergize the members into a team. It also allows the leader to be seen as a leader and not just someone that you report to.

**Comfort of hearing others' opinions openly.** It can be very uncomfortable discussing ideas and opinions one-on-one with the leader. However, if this is done by everyone as a team, there is less anxiety due to the fact that everyone is in the same boat. Such openness also create a norm of acceptable discussion.

**Looking for solutions jointly.** The saying "two heads are better than one" emphasizes the concept that there is usually more than one way to do something. Sometimes members get so caught up in their own thoughts and ideas that they don't see all the ways something can be done.

**Group self-critique.** If problems are aired by self-critique (eg, you talk about problems **you** are having), and everyone is doing it, it is easier to discuss the problems in a non-conflictive manner. By bringing up your own problems, you are trusting in the team to help you solve them. This also builds morale and esprit de corps.

**Developing consensus.** If there is consensus, the team as a whole gains a sense of ownership to the exercise. If everyone is in agreement, conflicts are resolved through solving the problem, not attacking the one who saw the problem.

**Stimulating ideas.** The atmosphere of the team focusing on one idea brings the creative level up for all the members. Discussing possible solutions stimulates other members to add to the idea to make it better.



In your opinion, why are meetings important?

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### THINGS TO WATCH OUT FOR DURING THE MEETING

As you have read, facilitating a meeting draws heavily on leadership principles and skills. The following are things to watch out for during the meeting.

**Control the talkative.** Some people can take a very long time to say very little. Remember, your meeting needs to stay on track. First try non-verbal cues (eg, staring the speaker in the eye) and, if necessary, verbal ones (eg, taking over the conversation by moving the discussion on) to control the talkative speaker.

**Draw out the silent.** Everyone's input is important, otherwise why are they at the meeting? However, for various reasons, most people remain silent throughout a meeting. People who are included in the planning / preparation of the project will usually work to make it successful.



#### **Activate Your Brain #3:**

For the following phrases, which style of communication (aggressive / passive / assertive) do they most resemble?

**Control the talkative**

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**Draw out the silent**

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**Protect the timid.** The input of the younger / less experienced members of the group may provoke disagreement with their seniors, which is reasonable. However, if the disagreement escalates to personal attacks or suggestions that the younger / less experienced members should not contribute ideas, the morale of the team will quickly deteriorate. Successful participation in a productive meeting builds confidence for all, especially the younger / less experienced members.

**Encourage the clash of ideas.** If the goal is to have the best outcome, then all ideas need to be thoroughly discussed. However, this may become a clash of personalities (between those whose ideas are being discussed) instead of the ideas. As chairperson, you need to keep the tone of the discussion professional. Keep the discussion on the ideas, not the people promoting them.

**Watch out for the suggestion-squashing reflex.** If people feel that making a suggestion will provoke the negative reaction of being laughed at or squashed, they will soon stop suggesting ideas. This can be most destructive if it is done by the chairperson! Instead, take notice of all suggestions, especially if it is suggested by a younger / less experienced member of the team.

**Come to the most senior people last.** This serves several purposes. It allows the younger / less experienced members of the team the experience of participating in the discussion. It also allows these younger / less experienced members to present their ideas before hearing the ideas of the older / more experienced members.



Remember when you were the younger / less experienced member of a team? Did you experience anxiety when you were teamed with older / more experienced cadets?

**Close on a note of achievement.** Making a meeting worth the effort means ensuring that it is seen as a success. At the end of the meeting, make it a point of emphasizing all that was accomplished. Remember, as chairperson, it is your responsibility to ensure the meeting was a success!



Congratulations, you have completed your self-study package on EO C503.01 (Examine Meeting Procedures). Complete the following exercise and hand the completed package to the Training / Proficiency Level Officer and have them record the completion in your Proficiency Level Five Logbook.

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**FINAL EXERCISE  
PREPARE A BRIEFING**

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Using the information briefing format, create a briefing for the provided exercise plan (Item #4 on the timetable).

*Note.* If there are more than five key points, use blank paper to complete.

**INTRODUCTION**

**Greeting:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose and Scope:**

**Give the big picture first.** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Explain the purpose and scope of your briefing.** \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

**Outline or Procedure:**

**Briefly summarize the key points and your general approach.** \_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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**Explain any special procedures (eg, demonstrations).** \_\_\_\_\_

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**BODY**

**Point #1:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Visual Aid?** No Yes Description: \_\_\_\_\_

**Possible Questions:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Transition:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Point #2:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Visual Aid?** No Yes Description: \_\_\_\_\_

**Possible Questions:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Transition:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Point #3:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Visual Aid?** No Yes Description: \_\_\_\_\_

**Possible Questions:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Transition:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Point #4:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Visual Aid?** No Yes Description: \_\_\_\_\_

**Possible Questions:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Transition:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Point #5:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Visual Aid?** No Yes Description: \_\_\_\_\_

**Possible Questions:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Transition:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**CLOSING**

**Ask for Questions**

**Briefly recap key points:**

Point #1: \_\_\_\_\_

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Point #2: \_\_\_\_\_

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Point #3: \_\_\_\_\_

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Point #4: \_\_\_\_\_

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Point #5: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Make a Concluding Statement:**

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**Announce What Will Be Happening Next:**

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