

Determining the Purpose

1. Determine the general purpose—to inform, to persuade, to entertain
2. Determine the specific purpose. This specific purpose needs to be sharp and focused. What is it you hope to accomplish?

For example, if the topic was hot-air balloons, is this a good specific purpose: “To inform my audience about hot-air balloons”?

Questions you need to ask about your specific purpose statement:

- A. Does it meet the assignment?
 - B. Can I do it in the time given?
 - C. Is it relevant to the audience?
 - D. Is it too silly for the audience?
 - E. Is it too technical for the audience?
3. Determine the central idea. This is a concise statement of what you expect to say.

Topic: Computers

General purpose: to inform

Specific purpose: to inform the audience of the major factors to consider when buying a notebook computer.

Central Idea: The major factors to consider when buying a notebook computer are price, speed, screen quality, and special features.