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# **Debate skills training with Alex Just**

**JOHN SMITH TRUST**   
GOVERNANCE • INCLUSION • SUSTAINABILITY

## Introduction

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Today we will think about improving our oracy skills by breaking them down into four skill sets.

- **Expression & Delivery**
- **Reasoning & Evidence**
- **Listening & Response**
- **Organisation & Prioritisation**

The exercises we will cover online and in Edinburgh will focus on all four skill sets.

These skills combine to make an effective, persuasive public speaker or debater.

# Expression and Delivery

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VERBAL STYLE

NON-VERBAL STYLE



# Reasoning & Evidence

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**Point** - a short statement or headline that is an important claim in your speech or argument

**Explanation** - an explanation of why the Point is true, and why it is important, adding context and clarification

**Evidence** - a statistic, case study or illustration that supports the Point and the Explanation

**Link** - a connection back to the Point and, where relevant, to the broader topic or theme of the speech as a whole.

## **Reasoning & Evidence**

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P - We should ban homework – because it stops young people having fun.

E – Childhood is meant to be a time to have fun and play about, as well as learning.

Homework makes us spend all of our time outside of school working, just like in school, so we don't have time to play, like when I couldn't play football. This is bad.

E - For example, this week I wanted to go and play football, but I had too much homework, so I couldn't.

L – So, because children are meant to have fun, and homework gets in the way, we should ban homework.

# Listening & response 2

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## ‘3 types of question’

It can be difficult sometimes coming up with questions to ask, whether your goal is to challenge or to inform. There are some broad categories of question that can be useful as structures for inspiration.

- Asking for more information about something that was said in the speech which you think would give a clearer picture.
- Asking about an issue or a topic that wasn't mentioned in the speech and that you think would be valuable or interesting to hear about.
- Presenting a different view or perspective to the main speech.

Alex will give a short speech in Edinburgh – you can interrupt him by saying *On a Point of Information!*

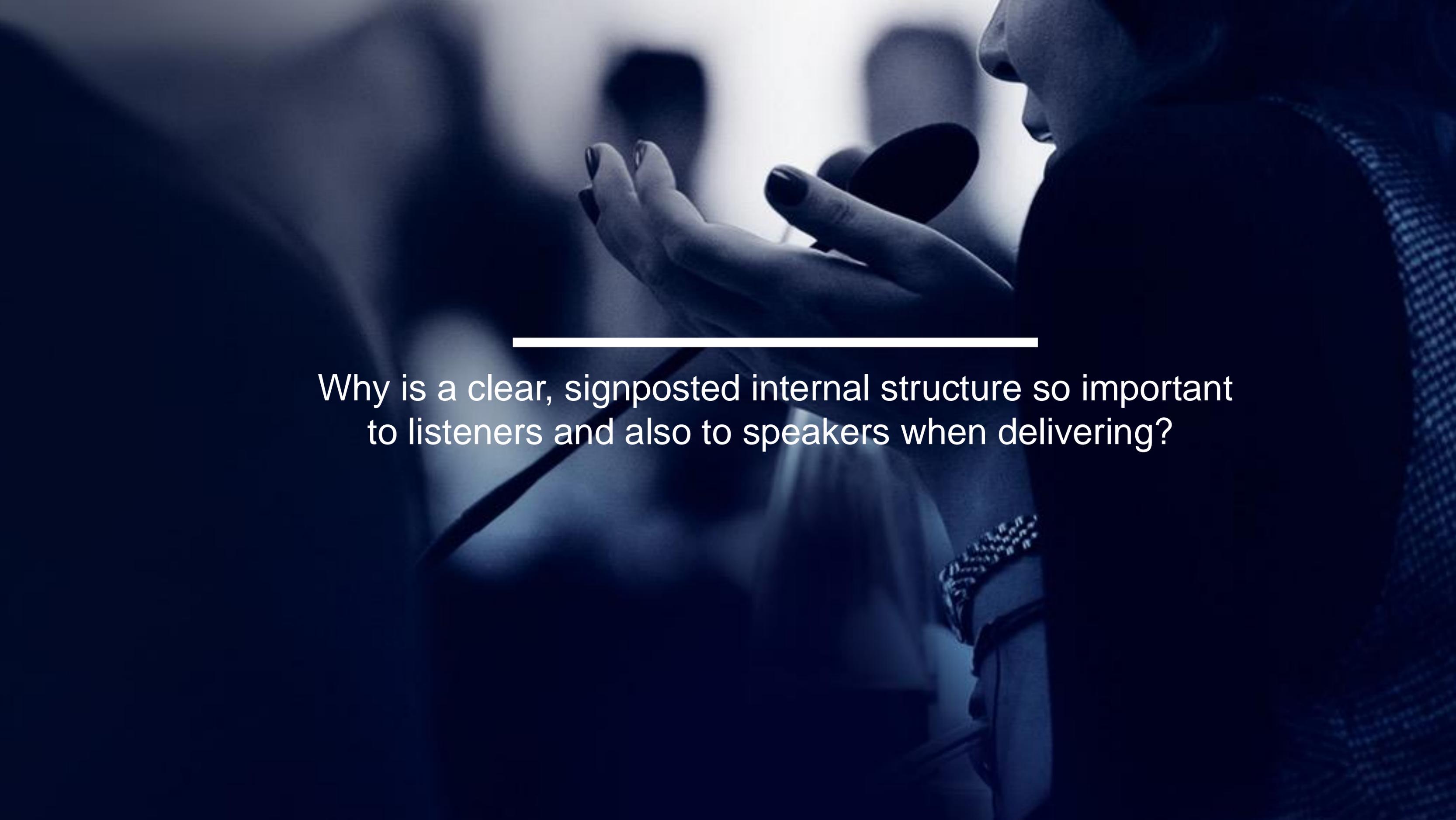
# Organisation & Prioritisation

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## Exercise – ‘Condensing Machine’

This exercise provides practice in listening to identify key information and summarising essential points.

- Participants will be given a couple of minutes to prepare some remarks for a short speech on ‘A hobby or pastime you are passionate about.’
- One will be picked to give a speech of 1-2 minutes. All participants will be asked to listen carefully and consider how they would summarise the speech.
- One will be called on to give a 30s summary.
- Another will be called on to give a 15s summary. That’s not very long at all!

A woman in profile, wearing a dark top and a patterned watch, is speaking into a microphone. Her hands are raised near the microphone. The background is a blurred crowd of people, suggesting a public speaking event. The entire image has a blue color cast.

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Why is a clear, signposted internal structure so important to listeners and also to speakers when delivering?

Your JST IWD 2024 Debating Motion:

*This house would apply a significantly  
lower rate of income tax to women*

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