Speech to Inform Sample Outline

Title: Shamanism
General purpose: To inform
Specific purpose: To inform the audience about the practice of shamanism in Native American traditions and the worldview in which it is embedded.
Thesis: Shamanism in Native American traditions is practiced to induce visions, for the purpose of healing and to foretell the future.

I. Introduction

A. A story from Toelkin’s Seeing with a Native Eye illustrates different perspective on reality.
B. Shamanism in Native American traditions needs to be understood from a non-Western worldview.
C. What may appear strange to the audience will hopefully be viewed in a different light.
D. I have had an interest in Native American traditions and gathered knowledge from a variety of books, both fiction and non-fiction.
E. I will ask you to view shamanism with a native eye as I cover visions, healing practices and foretelling the future.

II. Body

A. Becoming a shaman.
1. According to Joan Halifax’s Shamanic Voices, there are three main roads through which a young person, mostly men, becomes a shaman.
   a. One way is through family heritage.
   b. A person may have spiritual powers, such as prophetic dreams.
   c. A mysterious illness in which the person comes close to dying.
2. The shaman must develop his skills.
   a. A person who wants to become a shaman goes into the wilderness.
   b. A number of practices serve as initiation vehicles.
      i. The person will visit a sweat lodge.
      ii. The person will fast for extended periods.
      iii. The will bring on extreme fatigue to open up to altered states of consciousness.
      iv. In some tribes, peyote is used to induce hallucinations.
3. The shaman is brought to a tunnel or travels there mentally.
   a. The person meets his guardian spirit or power animal.
   b. Native American mythology views animals and humans as having similar qualities.
   c. The shaman learns to induce ecstasy through dance.
B. Shamanic healing practice
   1. Healing practices often involve sucking out the disease of someone’s body.
      a. Ecstatic dances are performed to call the spirit guardian.
      b. The shaman kneels and locates the intrusion.
      c. The shaman puts a plant in his mouth and sucks out the intrusion.
      d. The matter is eliminated into a bowl.
   2. The shaman may suffer more than the patient.
      a. Healing involves getting rid of negativity, which is absorbed by the shaman.
      b. The patient’s recovery is achieved through the shaman’s suffering.

C. Divining the future
   1. The shaman can envision an ailment, give spiritual advice, and foretell the future.
   2. The shaman is a healer, spiritual therapist, and soothsayer.
   3. The Lakota Sioux practice a “rock seeing method.”
      a. The shaman induces ecstasy and concentrates on a question.
      b. The shaman finds a large rock and reads its spirit images.
      c. The practice is similar to the Rorschach Test or free association.
      d. The Native American worldview sees animal images as manifestations of the
         Great Spirit.
   4. The Cherokee practice a ritual involving pebbles.
      a. The shaman induces ecstasy and places a round pebble in each of his hands.
      b. An announcement of the shaman seeking an answer to a question is made four
         times.
      c. If the pebble in the right hand moves, the answer is interpreted to mean yes,
         good, or do.
      d. If the pebble in the left hand moves, the answer is interpreted to mean no, bad,
         or don’t.

III. Conclusion
   A. Shamanic practices have to be viewed through the native eye.
   B. I hope to have shown you that the practices are not just hoaxes or wishful thinking.
   C. An understanding of the Native American worldview will hopefully lead to a
      better appreciation of specific rituals.

ADD REFERENCES (a minimum of 6 credible sources; alphabetically, APA style)
   Note: Wikipedia entries are unacceptable
ADD ATTACHMENT (answer to 5 questions)