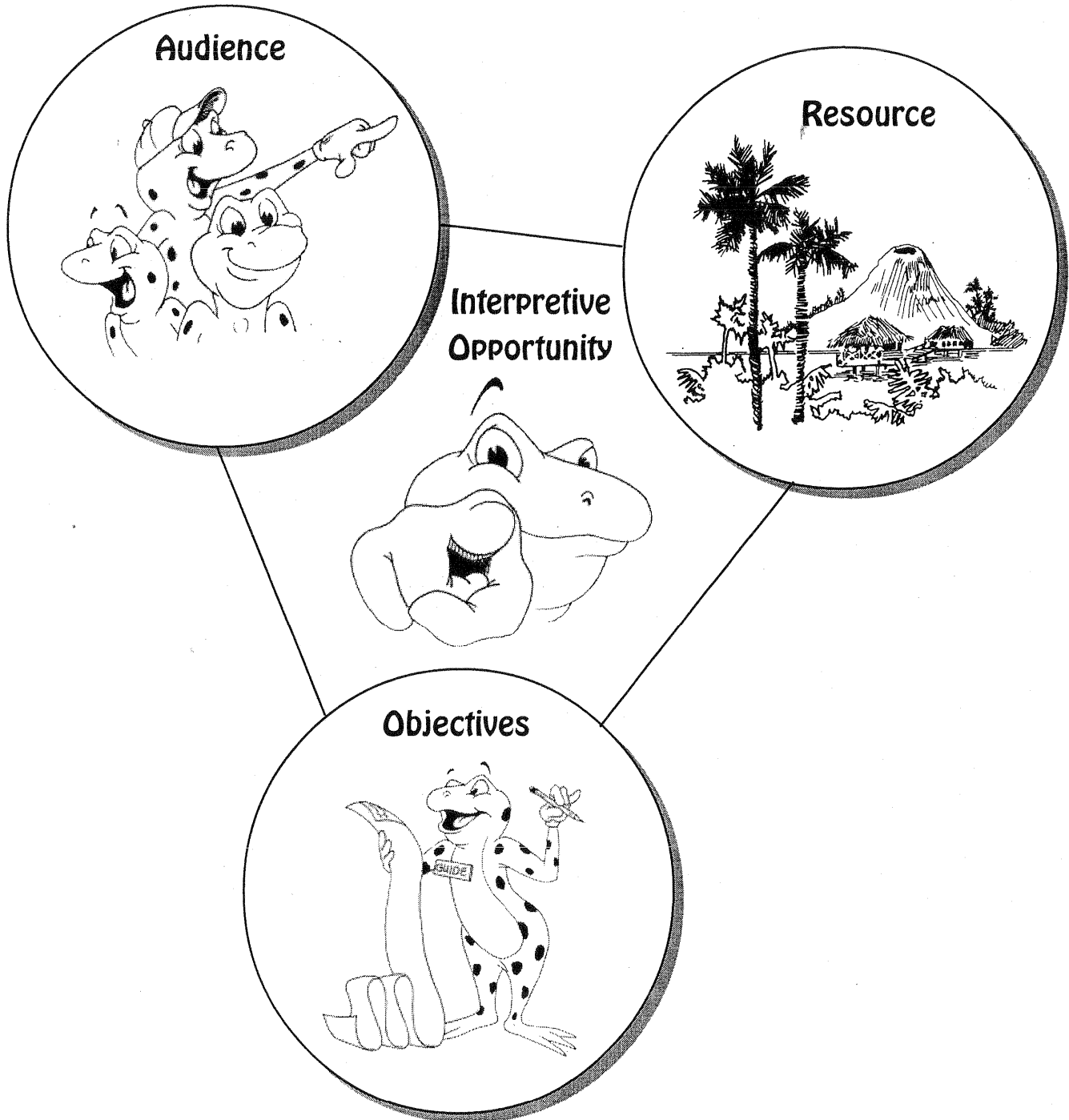


What it all Boils Down To



Interpretation is Thematic.

Every interpretive presentation should communicate a theme. The theme is the primary message you want to get across.

A theme is different than a topic. A topic can be considered a broad, general category such as:

- whales
- wildlife habitats
- historic houses

A theme narrows the focus of a topic and answers the question, “so what?” about the general topic. Themes are usually stated as complete sentences.

- Different whales use different methods to eat.
- We can help keep wildlife habitats healthy.
- Architecture styles influence lifestyles.

By stating your theme, you know where you're headed with your program, so the theme acts like a road map for you to plan the visitor's journey through your presentation. When you've reached your destination (the end of the presentation), your visitor should be able to tell you where you ended up (your theme) and how you got there (a few bits of supporting information).



Combining Two Approaches to Presentation Planning

Theme: Bald Eagles, the symbol of America and freedom, are back after a flirtation with extinction.

Subthemes:

1. Bald eagles are specially adapted for survival.
2. Their specialized diet created a problem that almost led to extinction.
3. Action by government agencies and individuals made the difference for the survival of the species.

