



Tips for Effective Public Speaking

Preparing the Presentation

1. Select a topic you know a lot about or have a lot of interest in. Complete the statement, *At the end of my presentation, my audience will ...* This ultimately becomes the thesis statement (the one sentence summary of your entire speech).
2. Create two or three main ideas that all support the thesis statement. Find support material for each main idea (statistics, hypothetical or real stories, definitions, explanations, testimony, examples, etc.). Support material helps develop each main point and makes it easier for listeners to comprehend your points.
3. Have a good structure.
 - Develop an introduction. Aim to begin your speech with a creative way of saying “I am going to start my speech, please pay attention to me.” Stories, pictures, quotes, videos, and stories are all a great way to do this. Be sure to include your thesis statement and a preview of your main ideas. When possible, connect your speech topic to your audience; make it relevant to them.
 - Use transitions between each point, between the intro and body of your speech, and between the body and the conclusion. Transitions show the relationship between the concepts and help the audience follow your train of thought. Use repetition and verbal signposts to help the listener anticipate and remember the information.
 - Develop a conclusion. Review your main points and end with a memorable statement.
4. Have a plan. What will you do if the technology fails and it’s just you and the audience? What will you do if you forget to bring your handouts? Expect the unexpected and be ready to adapt and overcome.

Practicing the Presentation

1. Don't memorize your presentation; absorb it. Create note cards or an outline for your speech. Don't write your speech out word for word; instead, list key words that will trigger your memory, or notes to motivate you to do your best.
2. Simulate the actual environment as much as possible – review the speech out loud, practice standing up if you will be standing during your speech, practice using your visual aid(s), practice wearing the clothes you'll be wearing on the day of your speech.
3. Time yourself giving the speech to ensure it meets the time constraints. Practice using eye contact and projecting your voice, and do your best to eliminate verbal fillers (um, and, basically, ah . . .).
4. Practice the speech in front of a mirror and in front of friends or family. Practice it in small chunks, focusing on the areas where you have the most difficulty. Practice, practice, practice—and listen to your practice audience. They'll give you good feedback.
5. Aim to have your last practice session about 24 hours before your actual speech.

Performing the Presentation

1. Public Speaking Anxiety rates as a top fear for many. The anxiety results from not knowing your material well. The best way to ensure you know your material is to practice. Never apologize, make excuses, or say you're nervous or that you forgot something. **Keep in mind you'll be managing your public speaking anxiety, not eliminating it.**
2. Use visual aids (Power Point, pictures, demonstrations, charts and graphs, posters, videos, etc.). If you can, make the presentation interactive and involve the audience. That takes the focus off of you.
3. Visualize yourself giving a great speech and look for familiar or smiling faces in the audience. You'll be the most nervous the first 30-60 seconds of your speech and then your heart rate will trail off.
4. Maintain good eye contact throughout the room. Don't look at the teacher.
5. Pretend you are comfortable and in charge, and you will be. Don't drag yourself up there or rush away when you're finished. Stay and calmly ask if there are any questions. Don't monopolize the time, but don't rush either. *It's your time.*