



Tips for Making a Public Speech

Tips for Making a Public Speech

If you find yourself in a position where you have to give a public presentation, you may be racked with nerves at the thought of standing in front of a group. It's normal to be scared. After all, probably most people in your audience would be just as nervous in front of a crowd too!

Here are some public speaking tips for conquering your fear and being a successful speaker:

- 1. Practice makes perfect.** Make your speech in front of a mirror or a friend so you can accurately time your speech and get into a rhythm. Practice speaking out loud, especially if there are hard to pronounce words or names.
- 2. You're the expert, so speak with conviction.** Even if you don't know everything about the topic, you should know enough about it to make it through your speech.
- 3. Project your voice.** Even though you'll likely use a microphone, if you speak too softly your audience members in the back of the room might not hear you well.
 - *Projecting your voice conveys confidence to your audience.*
- 4. Maintain eye contact.** Periodically glance around the room and use the *3-second rule* while looking directly into someone's eyes. Doing so will make your audience will feel more involved.
 - The 3-second rule means you take your eyes off your notes and look around the room. *Focus on a face for 3 seconds and then continue scanning the room.*

5. **Use humor in your speech.** Even if you're speaking about a dry topic, draw something funny into your speech. Not all of us are born comedians, so don't go overboard on this if it isn't natural.
6. **Pause periodically.** This gives your audience time to reflect and think about what you have said. This will also give you a breather so you can speak without feeling out of breath. It also paces what you say.
7. **Use note cards.** Note cards will remind you of the important points you want to make in your speech. Avoid writing out your entire speech and then reading it, however. This shows that you haven't really practiced what you're going to say and it can affect your speech if you start to fumble around for your place.
 - ***Short note cards with an outline of your topic or short facts can be helpful in keeping you on topic.***
8. **Don't worry if you make a mistake.** Everyone makes mistakes from time to time. If this happens to you, just go on with what you were saying. If you need to take a moment to re-align your thoughts, feel free to take it.
 - ***You're in command of the stage when you're the speaker.*** Most audiences are quite forgiving, so just keep moving forward if you make a mistake.
9. **Familiarize yourself with the audio-visual aids.** Much like your speech, make sure all the equipment is working and that you're familiar with the room and equipment ahead of time.
10. **Speak to your audience.** Be aware of your audience's reactions to what you're saying. If what you've said is not being understood, find a way to restate it.
11. **Handouts are a good aid.** You can do this one of two ways. Hand them out at the beginning of your presentation or as a summary at the end.
12. **Keep your speech within the time parameters.** Stop when your time is up. When you practice ahead of time, you'll get good at keeping within the time limits.

Every good speaker has had to learn how to give a good speech through trial and error, so the more speeches you give, the better you'll become!

Many speakers say that stage fright never really stops, but ***being prepared can definitely decrease the level of fear.*** Planning your speech ahead of time and talking about something you're passionate about can be an amazing experience.