

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Public speaking is something we cannot avoid in our life. The situation will arise when we are called upon to stand up and speak our minds out.

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Public speaking is one of the most feared activities in a student's lifetime. Anxiety and stress will usually attack once you get off your seat and start to speak. Sadly, this fear is the cause of lost promotions, low self esteem, miscommunications and similar situations. But why do some people excel on it? They make it look so easy...

Who?

- Who are you talking to? Know your audience, their background, values and common interests that may help you in your presentation. If you are speaking to a group of accountants then it will help if you focus your speech on data and statistics, or if you are speaking to a group of teenagers, you should know the latest fashion or in-thing so you can establish rapport and make your speech lighter and simpler.
- Knowing your listeners is imperative to a successful speech. It will also help you relax if you know the people who are going to listen to your presentation.

Where?

Knowing the venue and being there early is half the battle. Try to get a feel of the place. Stand on the stage or where ever you are suppose to deliver your speech. Try to visualize your audience listening to your speech.

Check the sound system and the availability of audio-visual aids if you need to use some. Being at the venue early will give you some time to prepare and compose yourself. You can also afford time for a last minute tweaking of your speech.

What?

What do you want to say? What is the speech for? If you are speaking to educate and inform your audience, make sure that you have accurate and updated facts in your presentation. It is not enough that you have prepared and have memorized your speech; you should also know what you are talking about and have made a thorough research about it.

How?

- How can you deliver your message across? A sound language skill is not enough to ensure success as a public speaker. Choose your words carefully and be sure to enunciate them. Poor articulation and pronunciation weighs much in evaluating your presentation.
- Visual aids are helpful to get your message across. You may use handouts or technical presentations to support your points. But the best visual aids are your facial expressions, hand gestures and body language. When practicing your speech, try to do it in front of a mirror to see how you look
- Make sure that you have a solid opening, a good transition and a memorable conclusion.

When?

- When is the best time to speak and stop? In communication, words are not the sole means of conveying a message. Your pause and stops also play an important role in delivering your point across.
- Know when to start speaking and when to stop. Be aware of how long your speech is and tailor it to suit your audience. If you are speaking to a groups of seventh graders, then chances are their attentions span is shorter than that of a twenty something university student.

Why?

Why should they listen to you? Why were you chosen to speak in public? Determine the reasons why you were picked to deliver a speech. It may be because of your educational background, your work experience or your status in the community. What ever it is, they want something from you. Identify the reason and prepare your speech to answer the audience expectations.