

Public Speaking Tips

Give Yourself a Solid Start

Great speeches are born from well-organized outlines. Plot yours according to the guidelines of the assignment– this will guarantee that you stick to the topic. You will have a clean, concise speech, tied up neatly like the beautiful PRESENT(ation) it is! Haha! But really, you will.

Win Them Over

These moves increase your audiences' enjoyment:

- Be YOU! Don't worry about trying to sound like anyone else. People sense when you're being phony and it's a turnoff. They can also sense when you're being genuine, and audiences like seeing the real you– after all, there's only one You! Let them in on all the unique awesomeness!
- One of the most compelling features of a speech is... STORYTELLING! And it makes sense. We all enjoy – and remember – little anecdotes people have told us, much more than those where people seem to be blasting info at us in long, dry sentences. One example: business expert Frances Cole Jones suggests that if you're using a PowerPoint, make each slide its own little story. If that's not possible for *every* slide – or if you're not using a Power Point, here's a simpler way: here and there, touch on some real-life experiences (stories) that relate to your topic.

Decisions, Decisions

Some professors let you decide what format to use – and there are many to choose from. Everything from index cards to Power Points to Smart Boards to visual aids to hands-on demonstrations. Go with whatever feels most comfortable and interesting to you. Then, keep your audience in mind as you create your presentation. **Easy Tip:** think about the best – and worst – speeches or lectures you've seen. What did the good ones use/do/look like/give you? How about the bad ones? See? You already know, firsthand, what does or doesn't work.

“Like” and “Umm”

Professors don't really, ummm... *like* these words. It's fine to take a pause –you need to breathe!– but try to fill that pause with a relaxing little inhale-exhale combo. (Note: a lot of people don't even realize when they're using these “filler” words – that's why it's so helpful to practice in front of someone else.)

Check, One, Two

If you are going to use any sort of technology, you know you want to get there early enough to make sure it works... and to get it fixed if it doesn't! We've all seen presentations that start badly: the speaker fumbling around with the lap top saying, “Is anyone here good with this kind of stuff?” It's uncomfortable – for everyone.

One is Better Than None

If you don't have time to practice your speech over and over, at least do one full run-through the day of the speech, even if it's just by yourself. And use a mirror. In our experience, practicing even ONE time makes you feel more confident and makes your speech flow nicer.

You Are Your Own Worst Critic

Remember this: they don't know what you planned to say, so they don't know if you mess it up! *You* may feel like you are completely failing your speech, but your audience probably hasn't even noticed any mistakes. Also, they can't see through your skull (just in case you thought they could), so they have no idea if you're nervous or not.

Public speaking is like dancing. When you trip up, you can totally play it off like nothing happened. Ever see the Youtube of Beyonce falling down a flight of stairs mid-concert? Check it out – she starts talking about it at 0:48. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mSOgFUNrMzM&feature=related>

Happy speaking!