

Practical Tips for Effective Public Speaking

1. Pick your topic carefully. Find a topic you are interested in and spend time developing and practicing your presentation. The more you practice and the more familiar you are with the topic, the more comfortable you will be during your presentation.
2. Everyone (almost) experiences anxiety about delivering a public presentation. This is perfectly normal. Just remember that you have something special to communicate to your audience. You are there to teach them about something and they are there because they want to hear you speak.
3. Organize your presentation. The following components may help you develop your presentation.
 - Introduction—All presentations should include an introduction that includes, first, an introduction of yourself and second, an introduction of your topic. Depending on the complexity of your subject it is also helpful to provide your audience with a “map” of what you are going to discuss about your topic. For instance, if your topic is shells, you might include the following sentence in your introduction: “I am going to introduce you to the world of shell collecting today by telling you how shells are formed, where they are found, and how they are classified. I am then going to show you the many types of shells that I have found and some of the different ways that I display them.” This type of introduction tells your audience what type of material you are going to cover during your presentation.
 - Body—This is the main segment of your presentation and should be developed in logical order. If you are describing a trip, tell about the trip in chronological order. If you are describing a science experiment, describe the sequence of the experiment in order so it will make sense to your audience.
 - Conclusion—Bring your presentation to a logical conclusion. End the story for the audience and then ask them if they have any questions. Remain standing while answering any questions. When all the questions have been answered, thank the audience and sit down.
4. Maintain eye contact (as much as possible) with the audience.
5. Your hands should stay at your sides unless you are using your hands for a hand gesture. Hands should never be in pockets, folded or engaging in other distracting motions, such as scratching, itching, clapping, etc!
6. Use visual aides if at all possible. This makes the presentation much more interesting to the audience.
7. Stand with good posture.
8. Project your voice. Remember that the audience needs to hear you. Speak clearly and slowly. When a person is nervous, he/she may tend to speak rapidly and this can make the presentation difficult to understand.
9. Know your material well enough so that you do not need to read your presentation from notes. It may be handy to have an outline available for you to look at as a reminder (or note cards).
10. Have fun. Smile. Enjoy. Your audience wants to hear what you have to present to them and they are your allies.
11. Practice, practice, practice!!

For the audience:

Please be attentive listeners when one of your classmates is presenting his/her presentation. Please do not speak or interrupt during a presentation.