

Tips for Speeches and Presentations

Speeches and/or presentations can be nerve-racking sometimes, especially if you're not used to speaking in front of large groups. Here are some tips to help you prepare for a successful and effective presentation and/or speech.

The Preparation

RESEARCH

- You should be an expert on the subject you're presenting on.
- Think, "what questions might the audience have?" and be prepared to answer those questions. Presenting to a group of students requires a different kind of approach than presenting to a group of professionals.

VISUAL PRESENTATION (PowerPoint, Prezi. etc.)

- Find good visuals, graphs, data etc. that go with your presentation. Visuals and graphs should be simple and to-the-point.
- Your PowerPoint/Prezi should have minimal bullet points/words. Have your bullets be a guide for what you're talking about for your audience to follow along.

NOTE CARDS

- Write out talking points on note cards. Your talking points should be something to glance at in case you forget what comes next, not a word-for-word list of your presentation.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

- Go through your speech/presentation in front of your friends.
- Make note of the places you go on too long or get nervous or stuck.
- Time yourself!

The Presentation

APPEARANCE

- Dress to impress – you want to look presentable while you're speaking in front of a crowd.

POWERPOINT/PREZI

- Do not read off of a screen – your visual presentation is for the audience only. It is there for them to look at while you speak directly to them.

- Don't "read" your speech or note cards. You're presenting to an audience, talk to them instead of reading to them.
- Use a remote if one is available. This way you don't have to stand behind a computer to change slides. If there is no remote ask a classmate to change slides for you.

BODY LANGUAGE

- Try not to show signs of nervousness, like crossing your arms or clutching your hands in front of you. (Practicing beforehand will help you be less nervous.)
- Make eye contact with your audience. If you're engaged in your presentation, your audience will be, also.

SLOW DOWN

- Don't rush through your presentation/speech – make sure you are articulate and clear when you're speaking.

PROJECT

- Speak clearly and confidently so each member of your audience can hear what you have to say.
- Eliminate the "ums," "uhs," and "likes" in your speech. These are filler words that damage the quality of your speech.

HAVE FUN!

- Remember: Relax! When you're in front of a crowd, work the room. Your audience will reflect your attitude. If you're having fun, your audience is going to enjoy your presentation that much more.