

[Home](#)

[liveaboutdotcom](#)

Public Speaking Tips for Students

By Jessica Stevenson

Updated March 24, 2018

At some point during your time as a student, you'll be assigned a presentation that involves public speaking. How can you get your point across to the class in an interesting way, avoid getting nervous, and get a good grade to boot?

Here are a few tips to help you achieve your public speaking goals.

Practice, Practice, Practice



Alys Tomlinson/Getty Images

Many people are good speakers, but most weren't born that way. What's the key to their success? Practice. Everyone who speaks well rehearses speeches and presentations ahead of time and asks others for their feedback.

Study your notes and practice your presentation in front of a mirror to get hints on how to improve your posture, body language, and gestures.

Use Note Cards Wisely

If you're allowed to use notes or an outline when speaking, consider putting your main points on note cards. On each card, list one point and a few supporting points or buzzwords that will jog your memory about the topic if your mind goes blank.

Avoid writing entire sentences on the cards because they're harder to read at a glance and encourage you to read your speech rather than speaking to the audience.

Consider Your Audience



Troy Aossey/Getty Images

One of the most important things to remember about public speaking is that you're speaking to an audience. Is the audience a group of your classmates? If so, what are some points about the topic that they might find interesting?

Consider adding anecdotes from the class or peppering the speech with bits of humor to keep your listeners interested. The more you can relate it to their own experiences, the better -- and the more positively you're likely to be received.

Slow Down Your Pace

The biggest mistake teen speakers make is talking too fast. It's something that happens to most of us when we're feeling anxious.

However, you can prevent yourself from speeding -- and make your presentation easier to understand -- by practicing your speech ahead of time for a friend, or by rehearsing it into a tape recorder and playing it back to hear how fast you're speaking and how many times you say things such as "like" and "um."

Pause, Project, and Speak Clearly



Image Source/Getty Images

Some people say it's helpful to imagine yourself singing the words to your speech, which would require you to pause and enunciate more than you do in everyday conversation. It also helps you to speak loudly and clearly enough so others can hear

you.

Another way to make sure you're pausing enough during your presentation is to take a small breath between each sentence. This is also a great opportunity to smile at your audience and gather your thoughts.

Make Eye Contact

Making eye contact with your audience members makes you appear confident and knowledgeable about your subject, plus it helps them feel connected to you and the topic you're speaking about.

If you're speaking to a small class, try to make eye contact with each person once during your presentation. If you're particularly nervous about speaking in front of the class, you can also try looking at an object just beyond the people in the audience, such as a clock or bulletin board on the back wall of the room.