



Public Speaking Presentations: Delivery

Really knowing your presentation's content and structure will help your delivery to be more natural. Practicing the actual speech will also help—so visit The HUB for feedback on your presentation! You can also use the following suggestions to enhance your delivery even more.

Voice

Of course, speak loudly enough for your audience to hear you; however, some other strategies can help you to control your voice so your presentations are more effective:

- *Speed*: People often speak quickly when they're nervous or stressed, so watch for this. Practice your speech in front of an audience and time yourself so you're comfortable with the length of the presentation and know that your content fits comfortably into the time allowed.
- *Variety*: If you say everything at the same rate and with the same tone, the audience can become bored or tuned out. So adjust the rate of your speaking! Slow down for emphasis. Or speed up to highlight excitement or urgency.
- *Pauses*: Use these strategically. A pause can emphasize an idea, let a point sink in, or help listeners understand that you're moving to a new idea. Be careful, though, to avoid pauses at unusual times—in the middle of sentences, for example. This can make your delivery choppy and can make it harder for listeners to follow your points.
- *Clarity*: If you have words or phrases that might be difficult to pronounce, practice these and consider writing out such words phonetically in your notes.

And be careful about how you inflect sentences: Statements will end with a lower pitch than do questions, which end with a raised pitch. (Think about how the following two sentences would be spoken differently: *Is it your turn to present?* versus *It's your turn to present.*) If you raise the pitch at the end of statements, listeners might confuse your statements with questions, and you'll sound less confident. Make certain your statements sound like statements and your questions sound like questions.



Eye Contact and Facial Expressions

Work on maintaining eye contact with your audience. In other words, don't simply read your notes or slides, and vary your use of eye contact depending on the size of your audience:

- For a smaller audience, make eye contact with different listeners throughout your speech and avoid focusing on a single audience member or section of the room. That type of eye contact can alienate your audience.
- For a large audience, look at one section of the audience at a time. You can divide the larger group into multiple sections and can shift from one to the next throughout the speech. Your visual shifts might take place when your content shifts and when you pause so as to further help listeners key in on transitions.

If you do use notes, use a large font so you can easily read the information with a quick glance.

Movement

Your movements and where you stand can help you to convey a feeling of natural confidence, so consider these tips and weave movements into your speech if those are appropriate:

- Incorporate hand gestures that work with your content and that make your presentation more dynamic. The trick is to avoid overthinking these, so practice your speech in front of an audience, in front of a mirror, or in front of a camera in order to consider how you're incorporating gestures that are natural and relevant to the presentation.
- Maintain good posture throughout your speech since that can enhance your presence and credibility. It'll also help you project your voice so your audience can hear you better.
- Make certain the audience sees you. You can use a podium, especially for formal presentations, but if the podium is too large for you to be seen easily step away from it.

Finally, always bring an appropriate level of engagement to your presentation and use facial expressions that align with the purpose and situation.