



Dear Students,

This month's topic is **'Public Speaking'**.

Public speaking is talking in front of a group of people. It can be a class presentation, a speech at an event, or a professional talk.

#### Why?

Public speaking is a key communication skill that you will use throughout your studies and your career. Learning how to present confidently and clearly will help you to make a positive impression on colleagues, supervisors, professors and fellow students.

#### How?

Most people are nervous to speak in front of others. In fact, it's said that people fear it more than anything else!

Read this e-newsletter to learn how to:

- prepare for giving a speech or presentation with visual aids and practice;
- calm your nerves before a speech
- project confidence with your body language; and
- learn from others while developing your own style.

#### Be Prepared

Experts agree that the *most important* thing you can do to reduce your public speaking nervousness is to prepare.

##### Step One: Write your speech or presentation

- Put in the time to adequately prepare for your presentation. This will show your audience that you are an informed and knowledgeable speaker.
- Learn as much about your audience as possible. Use that information to plan what you are going to say and how will you organize it.
- Organize your speech logically. Make sure your main point is clearly stated and supported by the rest of your presentation.
- The beginning and end of your speech are the most important.
- Engage your audience in the first 30 seconds. Consider starting with a statistic, quotation or interesting short story. Most importantly, clearly tell your audience what you are going to talk about.
- End with a strong, clear summary. Leave your audience with something to remember.
- After you put your speech or presentation together, make an outline. If you can, try to use the outline when presenting, not the written speech.

##### Step Two: Prepare Visual Aids

- Visual aids can be very useful, if done effectively.
- Diagrams, graphs, charts and/or photographs should all be directly related to the presentation and support what you are saying.
- Slides should be clear, simple and easy to understand.
- Use big enough font for everyone in the room to read.
- Any PowerPoint or other presentation should present only the main point, like an outline. Less text is better than more.
- Never (ever!) read from your visual aids. Reading from them will bore and distract your audience.

##### Step Three: Practice Practice Practice

- Practicing your speech will make you feel more confident and comfortable when you have to deliver it.
- Practice the whole speech at once, with whatever visual aids you will be using.
- Practice in the room where you'll be speaking, if possible.
- Practice with friends or family, or in front of a mirror. Or record yourself and watch it.
- Pay attention to your body language and nonverbal communication.
- Speak slowly.
- Time yourself and make sure to stay within the time frame you've been given.

**"Speech is power: speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel."**

**-Ralph Waldo Emerson**

#### Calming Your Nerves

Being prepared will go a long way in calming your nerves. But even if you're prepared, it's natural to feel nervous before a speech or presentation.

Try these five tips for harnessing that nervous energy.

1. Take deep breaths and relax your body.
2. Be positive. Focus on how well you think you'll do. Positive energy projects confidence.
3. Listen to music that makes you feel energetic. Audiences like enthusiastic speakers.

4. Think of your presentation as a conversation with one person rather than a large group. Get excited to share what you know.
5. Arrive early to get comfortable in the space where you will be presenting. Walk around. See what it looks like from the back and sides of the room.

Read this article for more [tips](#).

**"There are only two types of speakers in the world. 1. The nervous and 2. Liars."**

**-Mark Twain**

### **The Do's and Don'ts of Body Language**

Studies show that listeners trust nonverbal messages more than spoken words. Pay attention to your body language while speaking and presenting.

1. Make appropriate eye contact.
2. Stand up straight. Good posture projects confidence.
3. Wear proper attire.
4. Don't play with pockets, clothing, hair or jewelry.
5. Have energy and enthusiasm.
6. Face your audience.
7. Don't cross your arms.
8. Speak slowly. Don't be afraid to pause.
9. Don't fidget - tap your feet, swing your arms, or rub your neck repetitively.
10. If you move around, do it deliberately rather than pacing back and forth.

### **Learn from Others...**

When you hear others giving public speeches, pay attention to their content and delivery.

- Attend speaker sessions on campus or during internships.
- Watch speeches of people you admire.
- See TED talks (try [these](#), which also feature public speaking tips).

Think about these questions:

- What did you like about the way that they spoke? What didn't you like?
- What was the structure of their speech?
- Did the beginning of the speech capture your attention?
- Did the end of the speech summarize their main point?
- What did their body language tell you?
- Did they use visual aids effectively?
- How can you use these observations in your own speaking?

**My hesitancy in speech, which was once an annoyance, is now a pleasure. Its greatest benefit has been that it has taught me the economy of words.**

**-Mahatma Gandhi**

### **... But Be Yourself**

Audiences appreciate speakers that are authentic. Let your personality show when you are speaking. There is not one right way to be a public speaker.

Show your enthusiasm for what you are talking about. If you are excited, your audience will be excited. If you are bored, they will be bored.

Try something unconventional. Ask your audience a question. Use humour. Tell them a story. Show them why you care about what you are talking about.

For inspiration, read this [Forbes](#) article by a former public speaking trainer. She explains that formal training is often unnecessary because ultimately, "What makes a strong presenter is that their presence shines through, showing their passion and expertise for their topic."

Find your voice. And use it!



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