

Tips for Public Speaking

Smile and establish eye contact with your audience. Engage them and take them along with you on this oral presentation.

Eliminate “uhm”, “ah”, “er”, “you know”, “well, like..” and non-words and phrases used over and over in daily conversation.

Try to use different words for the same thing. Get out the Thesaurus and experiment with new words. Good use of vocabulary matters.

Create your own style, not copying others.

Avoid talking too fast. Make sure to breathe and set your pace.

It's fine to create pizzazz – what's hot, what's new, or to quote an article from the latest magazine, book or Internet resource.

Avoid memorizing your speech. Use notes or an outline to prompt you. Once you are truly familiar with your speech and have rehearsed it many times, it will flow naturally.

Make sure any humor used is appropriate for all ages and all audiences. Something funny to you *may* be offensive to others. Double and triple check your humor, for if it is used well, humor can add so much to your talk.

Check for bad habits: do you move around, rock from side to side, play with your hair or jewelry? Do you stuff your hands in your pockets, or are you fidgeting with something? Try and correct any of these motions or gestures and replace with natural and appropriate movements. Seek advice, if necessary, and practice what to do with your hands.

Videotape your speech and review it carefully. This is where you'll pick up on any annoying habits or nervous things you do.

You will be judged on posture, pronunciation and presence. If you have trouble pronouncing a word, do not use it. Stand up straight – no slouching – and dress for success!

Enjoy this experience! You are among an elite group of young people. You are all winners, just for trying. Congratulations!