

# *Presentation Tips for Public Speaking*

*Taken from A Research Guide For Students*

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*<http://www.aresearchguide.com/3tips.html>*

**Know** the needs of your audience and match your contents to their needs. **Know** your material thoroughly. Put what you have to say in a logical sequence. Ensure your speech will be captivating to your audience as well as worth their time and attention. Practice and rehearse your speech at home or where you can be at ease and comfortable, in front of a mirror, your family, friends or colleagues. Use a tape-recorder and listen to yourself. Videotape your presentation and analyze it. **Know** what your strong and weak points are. Emphasize your strong points during your presentation.

When you are presenting in front of an audience, you are performing as an **actor** is on stage. How you are being perceived is very important. Dress appropriately for the occasion. Be solemn if your topic is serious. Present the desired image to your audience. Look pleasant, enthusiastic, confident, proud, but not arrogant. Remain calm. Appear relaxed, even if you feel nervous. Speak slowly, enunciate clearly, and show appropriate emotion and feeling relating to your topic. Establish rapport with your audience. Speak to the person farthest away from you to ensure your voice is loud enough to project to the back of the room. Vary the tone of your voice and dramatize if necessary. If a microphone is available, adjust and adapt your voice accordingly.

**Body language** is important. Standing, walking or moving about with **appropriate** hand gesture or facial expression is preferred to sitting down or standing still with head down and reading from a prepared speech. Use audio-visual aids or props for enhancement if appropriate and necessary. Master the use of presentation software such as *PowerPoint* well before your presentation. Do not over-dazzle your audience with excessive use of animation, sound clips, or gaudy colors which are inappropriate for your topic. Do not torture your audience by putting a lengthy document in tiny print on an overhead and reading it out to them.

**Do not read from notes** for any extended length of time although it is quite acceptable to glance at your notes infrequently. Speak loudly and clearly. Sound confident. Do not mumble. If you made an error, correct it, and continue. No need to make excuses or apologize profusely.

**Maintain sincere eye contact** with your audience. Use the 3-second method, e.g. look straight into the eyes of a person in the audience for 3 seconds at a time. Have direct eye contact with a number of people in the audience, and every now and then glance at the whole audience while speaking. Use your eye contact to make everyone in your audience feel involved.

**Speak** to your audience, **listen** to their questions, **respond** to their reactions, **adjust** and **adapt**. If what you have prepared is obviously not getting across to your audience, change your strategy mid-stream if you are well prepared to do so. Remember that **communication** is the key to a successful presentation. If you are short of time, know what can be safely left out. If you have extra time, know what could be effectively added. Always be prepared for the unexpected.

**Pause.** Allow yourself and your audience a little time to reflect and think. Don't race through your presentation and leave your audience, as well as yourself, feeling out of breath.

Add **humor** whenever appropriate and possible. Keep audience interested throughout your entire presentation. Remember that an interesting speech makes time fly, but a boring speech is always too long to endure even if the presentation time is the same.

When using **audio-visual aids** to enhance your presentation, be sure all necessary equipment is set up and in good working order prior to the presentation. If possible, have an emergency backup system readily available. Check out the location ahead of time to ensure seating arrangements for audience, whiteboard, blackboard, lighting, location of projection screen, sound system, etc. are suitable for your presentation.

Have **handouts** ready and give them out at the appropriate time. Tell audience ahead of time that you will be giving out an outline of your presentation so that they will not waste time taking unnecessary notes during your presentation.

Know when to **STOP** talking. Use a timer or the microwave oven clock to time your presentation when preparing it at home. Just as you don't use unnecessary words in your written paper, you don't bore your audience with repetitious or unnecessary words in your oral presentation. To end your presentation, summarize your main points in the same way as you normally do in the **CONCLUSION** of a written paper. Remember, however, that there is a difference between spoken words appropriate for the ear and formally written words intended for reading. Terminate your presentation with an interesting remark or an appropriate punch line. Leave your listeners with a positive impression and a sense of completion. Do not belabor your closing remarks. Thank your audience and sit down.