



# Center for Writing and Speaking

## P NO. 10 IN THE CENTER FOR WRITING AND SPEAKING HANDOUT SERIES

### Movement, Delivery, and Establishing Credibility

*Once your presentation is ready, you can start practicing it. Here are some things to keep in mind as you do.*

#### Movement

- Movement begins as soon as you stand up, and it ends when you are back in your seat. Approach the space you are speaking in with confidence. Take a deep breath, arrange your notes, and wait quietly for your audience's attention.
- Think “head to the toe:”
  - Your head should scan the room, making eye contact around the different sections of the audience. Hold your head high to ensure that your voice is projected.
  - Your arms and hands should be relaxed for most of your presentation. Keep your fingers apart, and your arms loose and flexible. Your gestures should be crisp and controlled, kept above the waist, but below the neck. Try to keep your hands stay away from your face!
  - Your hips should be square on and face the front of the room—this keeps your head forward and towards the audience, so that your voice projects through the room. If you walk, walk with a purpose, as opposed to wandering around from side of the room to the other.
  - Stand with your feet in “K” with the left foot straight and the right foot slightly pointed out at an angle to remain stable.

#### Delivery

- Volume should be adjusted based on the acoustics of the room, which means you should practice in the room beforehand, with someone in the very back. If they can't hear you, your volume must go up. Remember that you sound louder to yourself than you do to the audience!
  - Avoid sounding monotone. If you sound bored of your speech, others will too. Record yourself and listen, or have someone in the room with you when you practice to ensure proper variation in pitch and tempo.
  - No matter how slowly you think you're speaking, you are probably speaking quickly or at a normal pace. Nerves tend to make us speak faster and higher. Speak slowly to explain something complex (like a definition) and faster when it is already known to the audience.
  - Avoid vocal fillers—uh, like, er, um. If you've lost your train of thought, take a deep breath and continue.
  - **Manuscript delivery:** There are times when you will need to speak from a manuscript. If this is the case, use underlining, highlighting, and cues (“eye contact,” “slow down,” “pause”) to guide your reading. Place one hand on the manuscript while you are reading and follow along in order to keep your place when you
- (continued on reverse)

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## **Movement, Delivery, and Establishing Credibility Continued**

look up. Practice turning the pages of the manuscript so that you can do so discreetly. Use at least a font size of 14 and double space your manuscript.

### **Establishing Credibility**

- Whenever you speak, your audience is probably asking questions like “how do they know that” and “how can they be sure?” If they are not confident in you, they will be less likely to accept any of the points you are presenting in your argument. Establishing credibility should not be the main part of your presentation, but it is an important section that should not be disregarded. Here are some ways to do it:
  - *Claim a prior experience.* One of the best ways to convince your audience that you know about a topic is to incorporate your personal experience with the issue. If you are talking about the effect of Alzheimer’s on families and your Grandmother has Alzheimer’s, let your audience know. Nothing establishes credibility with your audience quicker than letting them know—if you are comfortable—that you have first-hand experience. However, make sure you only claim an appropriate level and area of expertise. Acting all-knowing might actually make your audience less likely to trust you.
  - *Emphasize any special knowledge or relationship you may have about the subject.* The next best thing to firsthand knowledge is an academic history within your topic. If you are a Marine Biologist, your audience for your “Why the Fish Need Us” speech would probably be interested to know that.
  - *Explain why your perspective on the subject is special.* Even though you might not have any more personal experience or academic background (beyond the research you did for your speech), you still might have a special perspective. If you are speaking about the race riots and you are a black woman, you might have a different (and valuable!) perspective to share with your audience. Putting forth your unique perspectives helps your audience understand where you are coming from, adds to the general debate, and supports your credibility as a speaker with an important point of view to share.

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