



Center for Writing and Speaking

P NO. 12 IN THE CENTER FOR WRITING AND SPEAKING HANDOUT SERIES

Successful Speech Checklist

Speech Development Tips:

- Know your material, your audience, and your purpose.
- Develop a thesis statement and organize and support your argument just as you would for a paper. Make your thesis statement clear.
- Create an opening that engages your audience. Do not begin with, "My presentation is about." Think of your introduction as a roadmap to your speech. Your job is to encourage your audience to "ride along." Tell your audience where the speech is going, then go there.
- Discuss your main points carefully and succinctly, offering supporting evidence. Use transitions to connect your ideas and make it interesting!
- Be creative and use your sense of humor appropriately. Do not be afraid to try something unconventional, as long as it does not distract from your purpose.
- Craft a powerful conclusion. Leave the audience with something memorable. Do not say, "And, that is it!"
- Breathe, stretch, and imagine yourself delivering the speech easily and effectively.
- Time your speech beforehand, especially if you have limited time, in order to be respectful of others and reduce your own speech anxiety.
- Practice in front of friends or the mirror. Visit the Center for Writing and Speaking for feedback.

Delivery tips:

- Make frequent eye contact around the different sections of the audience.
- Use good posture. Hold your head high to ensure that your voice is projected.
- Avoid leaning on the podium or on the wall behind you, shifting your weight from one foot to another, or fidgeting.
- Keep your hips square on and face the front of the room. If you walk, walk with a purpose. Make sure it means something, as opposed to wandering around from side of the room to the other.
- Keep your hands in view and use them intentionally for emphasis.
- Prepare note cards, but do not memorize or read straight from them. Use them to guide your presentation and prompt your memory.
- Show enthusiasm. It will help engage your audience.
- Project and vary your voice. Decrease the use of verbal fillers (like, you know, um).
- Smile and relax to show your audience you are prepared and knowledgeable.
- Consider using a visual aid to illustrate your points, making sure it is relevant and visible to the entire audience.
- See our other Public Speaking handouts for more information.

AGNES SCOTT