

APSU Writing Center

Strategies for Managing Speech Anxiety

What is Speech Anxiety?

- Speech anxiety, often referred to as "stage fright," is a common experience for many speakers. This type of anxiety typically peaks just before a presentation and during the initial moments of speaking. As you progress through your speech, you may find that your anxiety decreases as you become more engaged with your content and audience.

Before Giving the Speech

- **Preparation is Key**
 - Before you give your speech, make sure that you have done the proper research about your topic and know the information. Create an outline that highlights your key points, and practice your speech multiple times. Familiarity with your content will help you feel more confident and at ease.
- **Identify Your Nervousness**
 - Take a moment to write down the reasons for your nervousness. Do you fear forgetting what to say? Understanding what triggers your anxiety can help you develop strategies to cope with it.
- **Understand the Speech Prompt**
 - Know the details of your assignment: your time limit, the size of your audience, and the available equipment (like PowerPoint). Having a backup plan, such as using visual aids, can save you if technology fails.
- **Focus on the Message**
 - Develop a plan for handling anxiety during your speech. For example, remind yourself:
 - "If I lose my place, I will take a deep breath and refocus before continuing."
 - "I have prepared well and know my material. I am capable of delivering this speech."
 - "My perspective is valuable, and my audience is eager to hear what I have to say."
- **Use Positive Self-Talk**
 - Reinforce your confidence by reminding yourself of your preparation. Think affirmations like, "I know my material," and "I can do this!" to counter any self-doubt.
- **Seek Support**
 - If you feel nervous about speaking in front of others, practice your speech with a peer or a writing tutor at the APSU Writing Center. Ask for constructive feedback: Did I speak too fast? Did I rely on filler words? What areas did I excel in? Were my key points clear?

During the Speech

- **Remember, You've Got This!**
 - Before you start, take a moment to calm your nerves. Look for a friendly face in the audience, share a smile, and begin your presentation confidently.
- **The Audience Wants You to Succeed**
 - Keep in mind that your peers likely share similar feelings of anxiety. They are there to learn from you and genuinely want you to succeed!



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References

University of Nevada Writing Center. (2014). *Speech Anxiety*.

<https://www.unr.edu/writing-speaking-center/writing-speaking-resources/speech-anxiety>

University of Pittsburgh Department of Communication. (n.d.). *Speech Anxiety*.

<https://www.comm.pitt.edu/speech-anxiety>