

APSU Writing Center

Strategies for Speaking Confidently

Why Do I Need to Practice Public Speaking?

- Building confidence as a speaker now will set you up for success in future presentations, interviews, and workplace meetings. Consistent practice makes speaking feel natural and helps you refine both your message and delivery style.

Public Speaking Practice

- Practice in front of others and ask for feedback to improve.
- Record and review your speech to spot areas like pacing, clarity, and energy.
- Practice with a peer or writing tutor (e.g., at the APSU Writing Center) and ask specific questions for constructive feedback. Did I speak too fast? Did I rely on filler words? What areas did I excel in?

Preparing and Using Notes Effectively

- Use notes as brief reminders; avoid reading directly to keep your audience engaged.
- If using slides, use them to support your message rather than reading word-for-word.

Structuring Your Speech

- Keep points clear and in logical order to make them easy for the audience to follow.
- Include phrases like “firstly,” “next,” and “in conclusion” to guide listeners through your speech.

Presenting with Confidence

- Dress professionally to boost confidence and make a positive impression.
- Step in front of the podium, using open gestures to project confidence.
- Make eye contact with people throughout the room to build rapport.
- Pause briefly between points to give your audience time to absorb the information.

Projecting Your Voice

- Practice staying silent when tempted to use fillers like “um,” “like,” or “you know.”
- Speak with a clear, steady tone and aim for a conversational style to keep listeners engaged.
- Imagine you’re talking to one person rather than a crowd.

Using Body Language Effectively

- Keep your hands relaxed and avoid nervous habits like tapping or playing with a pen.
- Use natural gestures and lean forward slightly to emphasize key points.

Connecting with the Audience

- Make eye contact with a few engaged audience members to create connection and feel supported.

Preparing for Q&A

- Think of questions the audience might have and prepare responses.
- It’s okay to admit you don’t have an answer and offer to follow up later.

Practice Makes Perfect

- Practice to build confidence and focus on the 3 Es of Effective Delivery: Energy, Eye Contact, and Expression. Remember, the more you practice, the more confident you'll become as a speaker!



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References

Gaffney, A. (2024). *Tips for effective delivery*. Hamilton College.

<https://www.hamilton.edu/academics/centers/oralcommunication/guides/tips-for-effective-delivery>

University of Nevada Writing Center. (2014). *Speech delivery practice*.

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