

Using Your Voice Correctly

When you speak, it is essential to use your voice to its best advantage. The chart below gives a few points to keep in mind when presenting a speech.

PRESENTING A SPEECH EFFECTIVELY

- Speak audibly and vary the volume of your voice. Try to keep it from becoming too loud or too soft.
- Speak with appropriate expression in your voice. Keep your audience interested. If you speak in a monotonous tone, your audience may become bored.
- Emphasize certain words or segments of the speech in order to make a particular point, inject humor, or create excitement or sympathy.
- Control the pacing of your speech. Do not speak too quickly or too slowly. Make effective use of pauses.
- Pronounce your words clearly and correctly. It is as important to hear the last syllable of a word as it is to hear the first.

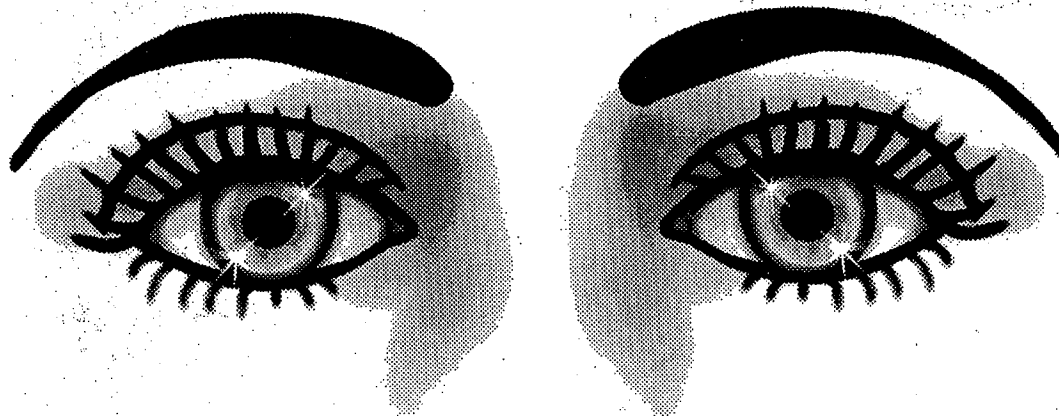
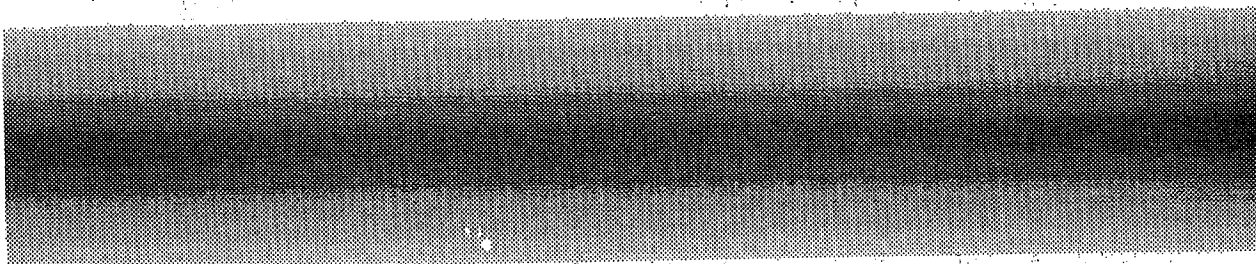
Eye Contact

Making eye contact with your audience is very important. Just think how you feel when a person who is speaking to you doesn't look at you. How do you feel? Do you wonder if the speaker is being dishonest or insincere? You may wonder if the speaker cares whether you are listening or not!

When giving a speech to a group, you may not be able to make eye contact with every listener in the audience. It is still important to look at the audience. Use a scanning gaze in the same way that you would pan the rows with a videocamera. Make quick glimpses of your note cards or outline and then look back at your listeners. Very often a speaker will focus on someone or something in the back of the room, such as a clock, a banner, a flag, or a photograph. You will want to avoid making direct eye contact if you think that it will cause you to lose your composure.

Use these techniques to practice making eye contact:

- Practice in front of a mirror. Be aware of how much time is spent looking down at your outline or notes and how much time is focused on the listeners.
- Have someone videotape you giving a two-minute speech.
- Working with a partner, alternate giving a short speech and evaluating your partner's speech for eye contact.



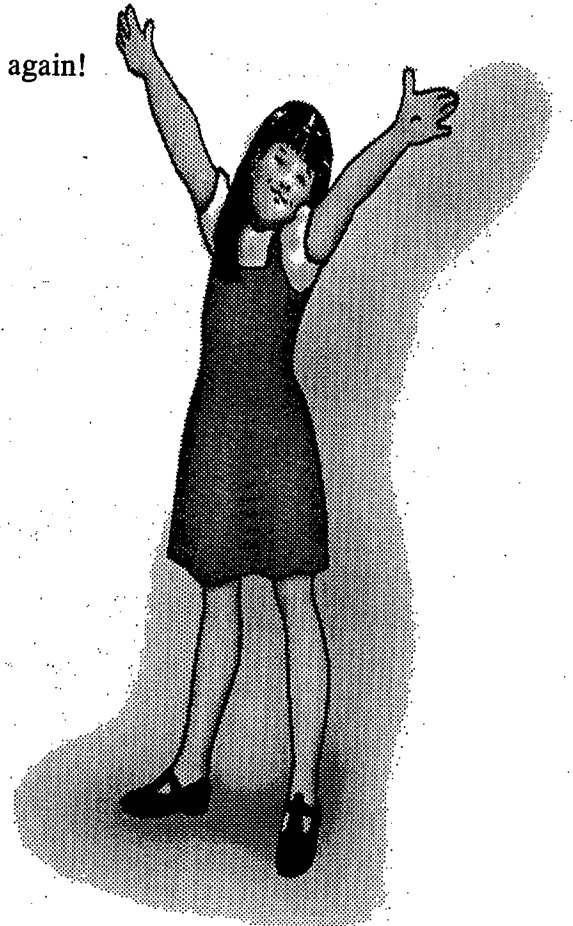
Body Language

Good body language is an essential part of every successful oral presentation. Here are some tips to follow:

1. Stand straight and tall. It is often distracting to the audience when the speaker leans or slumps during the speech.
2. Gestures or hand movements can provide added expression or emphasis to your talk. The use of gestures must be appropriate, natural, and meaningful. Gestures are often used to help you relate an emotional part of your speech. The following are some examples of gesturing: shaking your fist to show anger and wiping your eyes to show sadness.
3. Eliminate hand-wringing and other nervous gestures. These actions can take the audience's attention away from the main elements of your speech.

For this activity, you will work with a partner. Read the following statements. How would you interpret them with gestures? Take turns with your partner. Compare your interpretations.

1. I've told you before. I will not baby-sit for Billy again!
2. Look out! There's a car on your right!
3. Stand back until I open the door.
4. Why should I listen to your advice?
5. It's okay to enter the old house now. Follow me.
6. This movie is scary! I'm afraid to look.
7. Oh, no! We just missed our flight.
8. Let's be friends.



Facial Expressions

While you are speaking, you can also be communicating by the use of your facial expressions. Think of the ways faces look in anger, surprise, happiness, and sadness. You can sometimes tell if a person is in pain, is tense, or is relaxed just by noting his or her facial expression.

The most important facial expression you will want to remember is a smile. A smile conveys friendliness. It will help put yourself and your listeners at ease. Just as you would greet someone you meet with a smile, greet your audience, too, with a smile. Smiles can also come in handy if you make a mistake—simply smile, apologize, and continue with your speech.

Of course, if you are speaking about a very serious issue, you will not want to smile inappropriately. For example, you would not want to smile while reporting some sort of devastation or tragedy. Neither would you want to smile while giving a eulogy or taking an oath of office.

It is all right to laugh at yourself if you make an obvious mistake or if something happens that is out of your control: there is a power failure; a breeze blows away your note cards; the lectern and/or the microphone are not set at the correct height; or a bell rings right in the middle of a sentence. Try to smile in the face of these disturbances and be natural. Do not let them upset you!

Make sure that you can read and understand your note cards or outline easily. If you cannot, you may unknowingly make faces or squint while trying to read them.

Remember to check yourself in a mirror and on videotape.



Inflection and Speed

Inflection

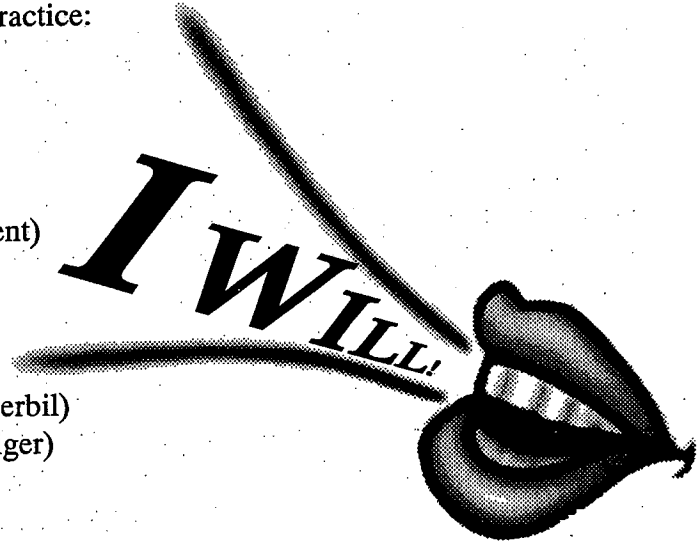
How you emphasize certain words or word parts can make a big difference in your speaking and reading. In some cases, the emphasis can actually signify a change in meaning. Here are some phrases and sentences for you to practice:

I WILL

- “I will.” (with politeness)
- “I will.” (with anger and resentment)
- “I will!” (with enthusiasm and excitement)
- “I will?” (with confusion)

ANDREW'S PET

- “This is Andrew's pet.” (pointing to a gerbil)
- “This is Andrew's pet.” (pointing to a tiger)



POLITE OR RUDE?

You have heard some phrases or expressions of politeness that are given a different meaning by the way they were spoken in certain circumstances. Try these. See if you can change the meanings of these polite expressions by the way you say them:

- Thank you.
- Excuse me.
- After you.
- I'm sorry.
- Pardon me.

Speed

The speed at which you speak can make a difference in how well you are understood and how difficult or easy it is for the listener to follow and get your message. In a conversation, the speakers alternate. Each speaker has a chance to absorb the other's comments. In a speech, however, it is more difficult to absorb the speaker's comments. You must, therefore, speak more slowly when giving a speech than when taking part in a conversation.

Most people have a tendency to deliver an oral presentation much too quickly. In an effort to “get through it,” the speaker often rushes. When reading written work, we pause at commas, semi-colons, periods, and other punctuation marks. An effective speaker must also pause to emphasize certain points of the message and to give listeners a chance to absorb what is said.

PRACTICE: Tape record yourself reading a few paragraphs as you normally would. Listen to yourself. Exchange tapes with a partner. Critique each other.

Getting Attention

Lead

Part of being a good public speaker is having the attention of the listeners. In order to get the attention of a group it is often necessary to make a startling statement or to ask a thought-provoking question as the opening of your speech. Sometimes a really confident speaker may even use humor. Getting everyone to laugh is tricky, but if you can do it, it usually makes the listeners more receptive to what you are about to say.

If you were making a speech about summer jobs, the following might be a good opening statement: "You can be paid to avoid boredom." Most people's ears would perk up and you'd have their attention, at least for a few minutes. Once you had their attention, you'd proceed to explain the benefits of working during the summer and that two of those benefits were avoiding boredom and making money. Another attention-getter for the same topic might be the following: "Get the most from your summer break."

Here's your chance to write your own attention-getters. Write two opening statements for a speech about the benefits of having a summer job.

1. _____

2. _____

Now write two opening statements for a speech about the benefits of participating in team sports. Remember, you want to get the attention of your listeners.

1. _____

2. _____

Exchange with another student and critique each other's work. Keep your comments constructive!

Benefits of typing rather than cursive

Framing Your Speech: The Main Parts of a Speech

Just as a house needs a framework to give it shape and to help it stand up, a good speech needs a framework to help keep it together, in sequence and on topic. The framework is basic and simple, but very effective. Every speech should have an introduction, a body (or middle), and a conclusion.

THE INTRODUCTION

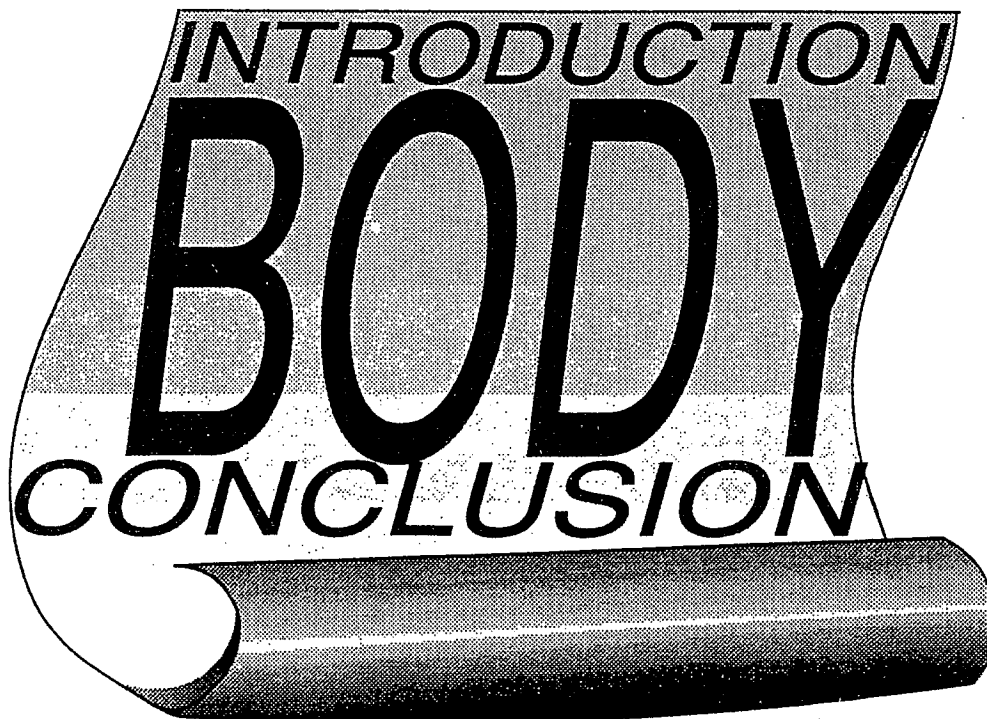
The introduction is where you'll get the attention of the audience. It is where you will prepare the listeners for the full message of your speech. You want to get the listeners to focus on the issue that they are about to hear. State briefly what your speech is going to cover, including at least three main points.

THE BODY

The body is where you will give information and expand on the main points that you mentioned in the introduction. In the introduction you focused on a certain aspect of the topic. In the body you will expand that focus. You will repeat some information, but in much greater detail. Give examples, use statistics, and refer to visual displays. You might even want to use slides to emphasize and/or illustrate the points you are making.

THE CONCLUSION

The conclusion of your speech is where you will summarize your position and the points you made during the body of the speech. Draw together all of the information presented in the body. This is your opportunity to emphasize once more the points you presented in both the introduction and the body of the speech.

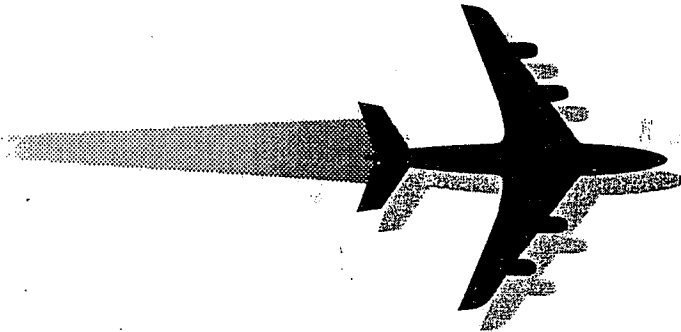


Using Note Cards

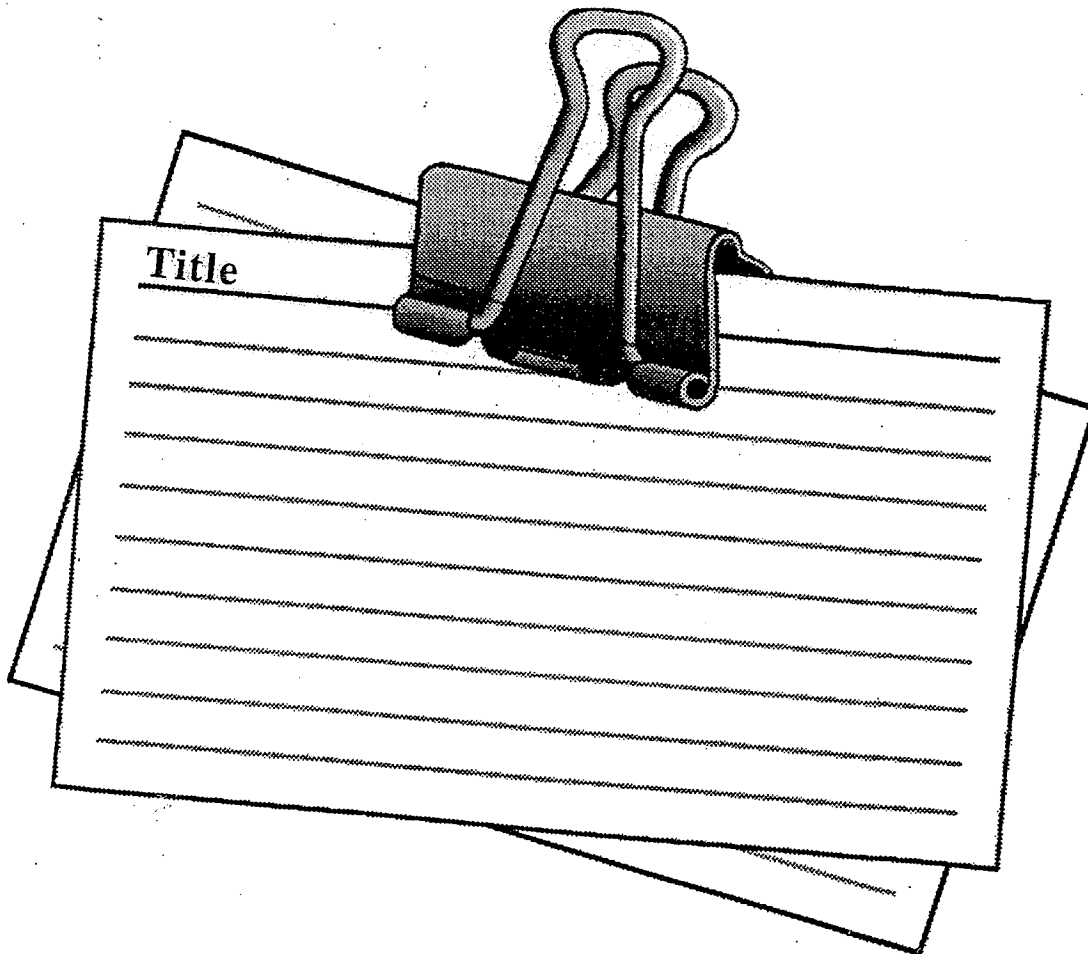
One way to organize a speech is to list important words or facts on note cards. Opening words, important details that support the main idea, and summarizing statements can be noted. However, do not write too much of your speech on the note cards or you might be tempted to read rather than to speak freely. Just use the notes as a guide. Always remember to focus on your audience when you are giving a speech! It might be helpful to list your key thoughts in outline form. An example follows:

My First Airplane Flight

- I. Ride to airport
- II. Almost missed plane
- III. Friendly pilot
- IV. Watched movie
- V. Happy landing



Pretend that you are about to give a speech about a “first experience.” Fill in the note card below. What key ideas would you list that would help you to remember your speech?



Using an Outline

Some speakers prefer to use an outline instead of note cards. Outlining is another way to organize information and your thoughts; it can help you stay focused as you gather information. It will also help you keep your remarks flowing and in logical order when you write your speech. As with note cards, you must remember not to read from your outline. Rather, you should glance at your outline from time to time to keep yourself on target.

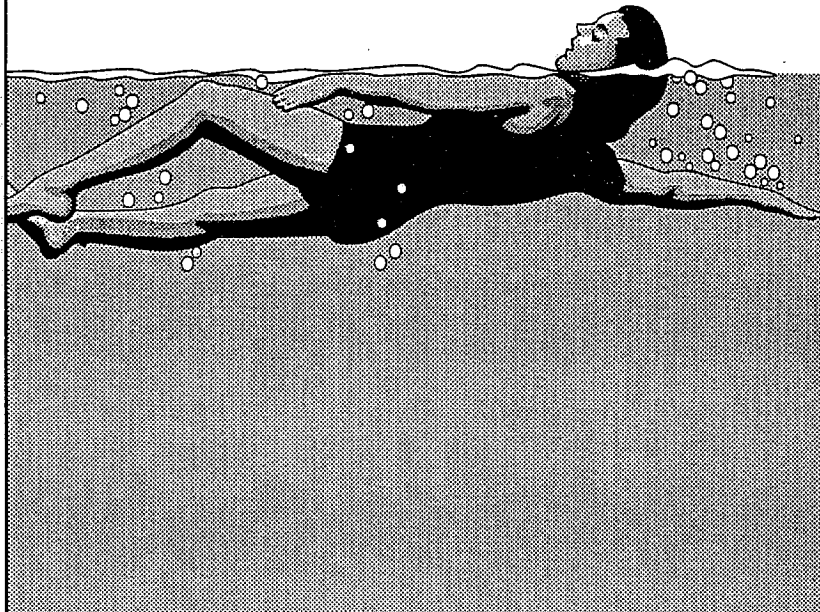
Outlines divide the subject into several parts:

- Title:** The title tells what the outline is all about.
- Main Topic:** Each main topic tells a very important idea. It is numbered with a Roman numeral and a period.
- Subtopic:** Each subtopic gives some information about the main topic. A capital letter followed by a period is used for each.
- Details:** Details give extra information relating to the topic. Cardinal numbers followed by a period are used. If more detailed information is needed, lower case letters followed by a period are used.

Weave the parts of your outline into the appropriate parts of your speech. Keep in mind all that you learned about framing your speech. Remember to write a good opening sentence in order to get the listeners' attention. Look at the sample outline below.

LEARNING TO SWIM

- I. Reasons for learning
 - A. Enjoyment
 - 1. In warm weather
 - 2. All year
 - B. Team sport
 - C. Survival
 - 1. My own
 - 2. Helping others
- II. Where to get lessons
 - A. Swim club
 - B. Sports center
 - C. Community center
 - D. School
 - E. Neighborhood pool



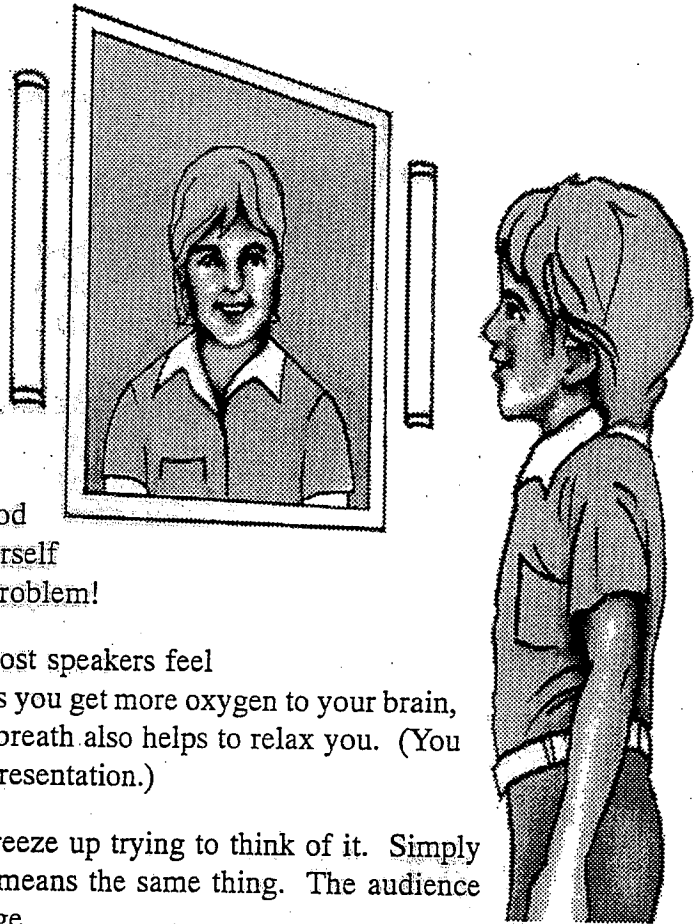
Pretend that you are going to give a speech about learning to do something. Write an outline for that speech on another sheet of paper.

Just Before Speaking...

You may not know it, but many performers and athletes have a mental and physical routine that they go through just before they perform. Their routines may be talking to themselves, going through the motions of the physical activity, imagining themselves performing it perfectly, meditating, doing relaxation exercises, or calling a certain person on the phone.

It may help you to feel confident and prepared if shortly before your speech, you check yourself according to the following items. You may want to add things to this list to personalize it to meet your own needs.

1. Check your appearance in a mirror, a full-length one if you have it. Is your hair neat? Is your shirt tucked in? Do you feel generally presentable and comfortable in your clothing?
2. If you are using an outline, review it.
3. If you are using note cards, make sure that they are easy to read and in the correct order.
4. Remind yourself that you are a good speaker and that you have prepared yourself well. There is NO reason to expect a problem!
5. Don't be afraid if you are nervous. Most speakers feel nervous. Just take a deep breath; it helps you get more oxygen to your brain, which aids in thinking. Taking a deep breath also helps to relax you. (You can also do this during your speaking presentation.)
6. If you forget a word or phrase, don't freeze up trying to think of it. Simply substitute another word or phrase that means the same thing. The audience will not know that you've made a change.
7. It will help to remember that everyone else would feel the same in your situation.
8. Remind yourself that everyone wants you to do well.



Expert Tips

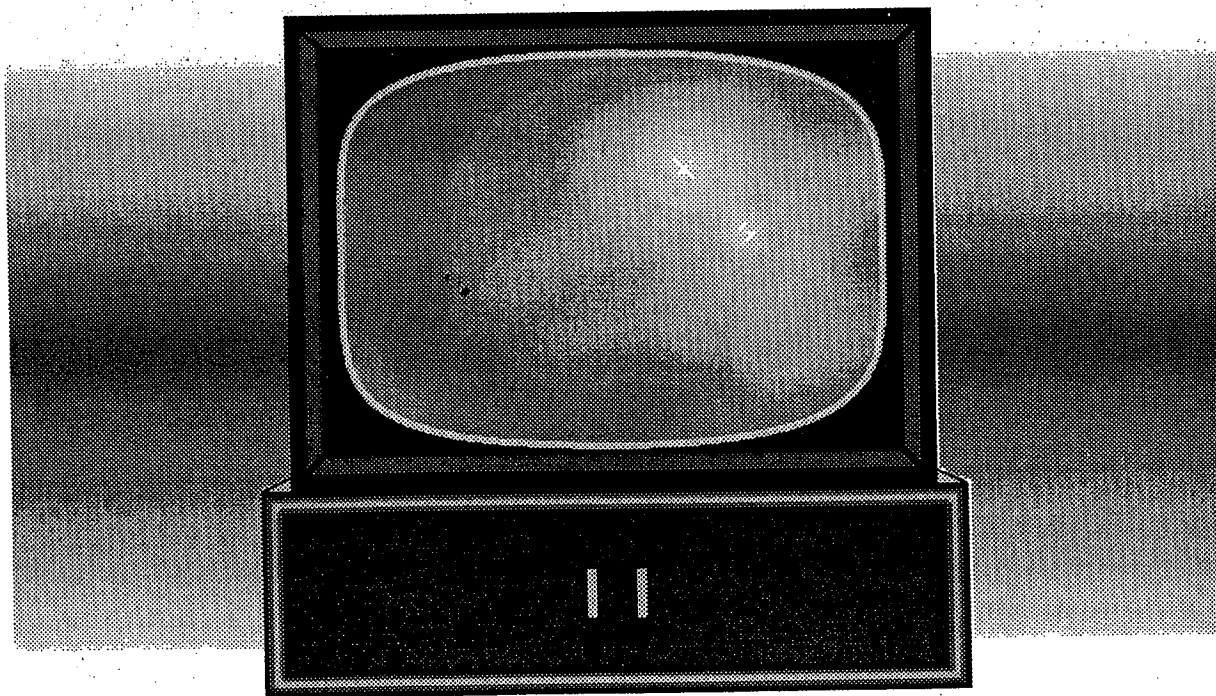
You can get some tips for public speaking by watching television. There are several types of broadcasts during which you can see and hear examples of public speaking. The types of broadcasts to look for include news programs, speeches made by political candidates and government officials, and interview shows.

Although some news shows, such as many of the "news magazines," are prerecorded, many news shows are recorded live. Watch the anchor carefully. Note his/her body language, eye contact, and facial expressions. Does he/she smile and remain serious at appropriate times?

You may have the opportunity to see and hear the President of the United States deliver a speech on television. Once a year the President delivers a State of the Union Address. In addition to prepared speeches, the President often holds press conferences. These conferences are situations in which a group of reporters have the opportunity to ask the President questions. The President's responses are not speeches, but they are a type of public speaking.

When an election is approaching, political candidates often appear on TV. They may be delivering speeches, debating opponents, or holding press conferences. (Paid political announcements are different.) Political candidates may be appearing in your area; perhaps you will be able to attend one of these events in person.

Although the situations described above may differ from what you may be asked to do, you can gain very valuable information by watching and analyzing these examples of public speaking. After all, many of these news anchors, reporters, public officials, and political candidates received many hours of training in public speaking before they reached their present positions.



Evaluate the Experts

Use this checklist to evaluate three expert speakers or the same speaker on three separate occasions. **You should have three copies of this sheet.**

Evaluation of _____

Date: _____ By: _____

Reason for Speech: _____

Where Seen: _____

Rate the speaker according to the following system. Compare this person to other professional speakers you have heard. Fill in the appropriate numeral for each statement.

4: Excellent

3: Very Good

2: Average

1: Not Very Good

RATING

- _____ 1. Has a good opening statement
- _____ 2. Makes eye contact
- _____ 3. Speaks clearly
- _____ 4. Uses a good rate of speed
- _____ 5. Speaks with expression
- _____ 6. Appears comfortable
- _____ 7. Uses appropriate facial expressions
- _____ 8. Uses appropriate body language
- _____ 9. Message sticks to the point and flows logically
- _____ 10. Appears connected to the listeners
(use of notes does not distract from speech)

OVERALL RATING: _____

WHAT I/HE/SHE DID WELL:

WHAT NEEDS MORE WORK:

