General Guidelines for Delivery of Speeches

The most important key to a good delivery is practice! Rehearsing the speech before you actually deliver it will help you to:

- Feel more comfortable with your material.
- Feel less nervous.
- Rely on your notes less.
- Give more attention to your audience.
- Ensure that your speech falls in the designated time limit.
- Locate and fix any trouble spots.

How do I practice?

1. Read through your notes several times alone.
2. Ask a friend to help you rehearse.
   - Begin by telling her/him your intentions and main points.
   - Ask your friend to point out anything that is not clear.
   - You may want to use a classmate, so you can help each other.
3. Again, practice the speech several times alone.
   - Rehearse in front of a mirror.
   - Try to rely on your notes less each time.
   - Practice looking up to address all areas of the room.
   - Remember to add emphasis to important points.
   - Time yourself to ensure that the speech is within the time limit for the assignment.
   - Remember that you will tend to speak faster when you speak in class.
4. Finally, have a friend listen to your speech
   - Ask about your verbal and nonverbal delivery, your idiosyncrasies, your rate of delivery, and the clarity of your ideas.
   - After you discuss these elements, rehearse the speech again.

How do I enhance my verbal delivery?

1. Remember to project. Speak loudly so that people in the back of the room can hear you.
2. Speak at a comfortable rate.
   - Do not speak too quickly or too slowly.
   - Pause occasionally, both so that you can breathe and so that your audience can understand your ideas.
3. Speak clearly. Articulate your words so that you do not mumble.
4. Keep your volume steady. Do not speak more softly at the end of each sentence.

5. Avoid speaking in a monotone.
   • Vary the intensity and pitch of your voice.
   • Concentrate on the feelings that you want to convey.

6. Avoid bad vocal habits.
   • Do not use vocalized pauses (e.g., “uh,” “um,” “OK,” “like,” etc.).
   • Do not use unusual inflection (e.g., Saying every sentence? or phrase? as if it were a question?).
   • Watch for these problems as you practice.

**How do I enhance my nonverbal delivery?**

1. Make eye contact with individuals in your audience as you speak.
   • Do not read from your notes.
   • Try to look up more than down.

2. Move around your space as you speak.
   • This helps to control nervousness and makes the speech more interesting to your audience.
   • An animated speaker is more interesting than a static one.

3. Add emphasis to your speech by gesturing with your hands and arms.

4. Use your notes unobtrusively. Make sure that the writing is clear and legible, so that you do not lose your place.

5. Avoid distracting mannerisms and gestures such as playing with your hair or clothes or swaying.

**You will be nervous but remember:**

1. No one has ever died while giving a speech.

2. Everyone else in class is equally nervous.

3. No one will think that you look foolish.
   • The class will express empathy and encourage your success.
   • No one wants to watch others fail.

4. Most signs of nervousness are invisible to your audience (e.g. sweaty palms, shaky knees, cottonmouth, butterflies, etc.). You do not look as nervous as you feel.

5. Never “lose your cool” or quit in the middle of a speech.
   • If you lose your place, do not tell the audience. Take time to collect yourself, find your place, and resume speaking.
   • If you begin poorly, do not allow it to affect you. Simply stop and begin again.

6. Nervousness is important because it makes you more alert, animated, and enthusiastic.