

General Guidelines for Speech Delivery

The key to delivering a good speech is practice. Rehearsing the speech before you deliver it will help you to feel more comfortable with your material and less nervous. It will also allow you to give more attention to your audience as you rely less on your notes. Practice will also help you locate and fix any trouble spots and meet designated time limits.

How do I practice?

Read through your notes several times alone.

Ask a friend or classmate to help you rehearse.

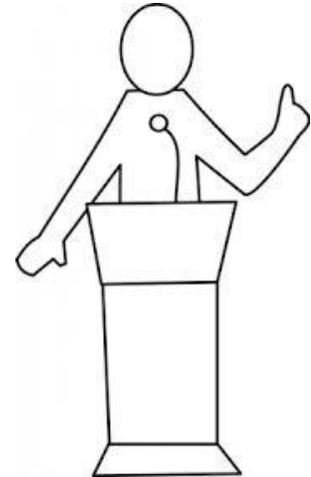
- Begin by sharing your intentions and main points.
- Ask your friend to point out anything that is not clear.

Then 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.
- Remember that you will tend to speak faster when you speak in class.

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?

Remember to project. Speak loudly so that people in the back of the room can hear you.

Speak at a comfortable rate. Pause occasionally, both so that you can breathe and so that your audience can understand your ideas.

Speak clearly. Articulate your words and do not mumble.

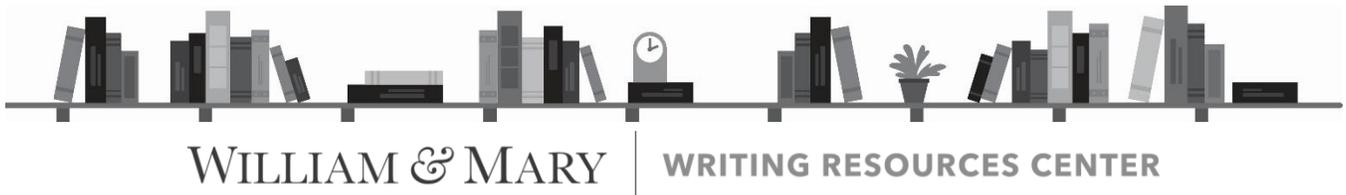
Keep your volume steady. Do not speak more softly at the end of each sentence.

Avoid speaking in a monotone.

- Vary the intensity and pitch of your voice.
- Concentrate on the feelings that you want to convey.

Avoid bad vocal habits.

- Do not use vocalized pauses (e.g., *uh*, *um*, *OK*, *like*).
- Do not use unusual inflection (e.g., Saying every sentence? or phrase? as if it were a question?).



How do I enhance my nonverbal delivery?

Make eye contact with individuals in your audience as you speak.

- Do not read from your notes.
- Try to look up more than down.

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.

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

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

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

You will be nervous, but remember:

- Everyone else in class is equally nervous.
- No one will think that you look foolish. The class will express empathy and encourage your success. No one wants to watch others fail.
- 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.
- 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.

- Nervousness can be helpful because it makes you more alert, animated, and enthusiastic.

