

Practice, Practice, Practice

Before presenting your speech to an audience, be sure to practice it. When you are rehearsing your speech, be aware of two things:

1. Firstly, make sure that you are familiar with the parts of your speech and what you are planning on saying. Take note of the order that you are going to make your points. You should be familiar enough with your speech that your formal notes are kept only as a guide for you, not as something to be read to the audience.
2. Secondly, be aware of your speech delivery. Practice things like gestures, voice intonation, body language and eye contact. If you can't perform these things at home by yourself, you'll have a much greater time doing them in front of an audience.

Video Tape Your Speech

The best way to practice your speech is to videotape yourself giving the speech and then watch it on a television. This can be painful, but there is no better way to find out what quirks and foibles you have that you are not even aware of.

- Borrow a video camera from your teacher, a parent or a friend and set it up to record yourself giving your speech. (If available, a tripod works really well for this.)
- When taping the speech, practice as if you are in front of an audience, right from the beginning. You will be far more confident when the big day actually arrives.
- You may even want to dress up as you would on the day that you're presenting your speech in class.
- When watching the tape, note things like your eye contact, body language, tone and inflection, and your hand gestures. Are you too reserved? Too flamboyant? Too loud or quiet? These are the things that you are going to have to practice before you give your speech.
- Be critical of yourself. When watching the tape of your speech, were you entertained? Did the speech make sense? Was it interesting? If the speech doesn't make sense to you now, or it seems a little dull, it's not going to engage your audience at all.
- If you can't get access to a video camera, try taping your speech with a sound recording device, like a computer or a tape player. This way, you may not be able to see what an audience is going to see, but at least you will be able to hear what they're going to hear.