

Speaking in Public

Your project might require you to speak in public. If you're prepared and you believe in the importance of what you have to say, then you'll do well.

Preparing Your Speech

- **Decide on the purpose of the speech.** Sum it up in one sentence.
- **Consider your audience.** You would not give the same speech to the city council as you would go to a pep rally. Who is your audience? What do they care about? How much do they already know?
- **Brainstorm ideas.** Write them down so you don't forget. Even silly ideas can lead to good ideas.
- **Organize your ideas.** Your speech should have a beginning, middle, and an end. First tell the audience what you're going to say, then say it, and then conclude by telling them what you've said.
- **Write your speech.** You won't read the speech, but you should write it down for three reasons: (1) It will organize your thoughts. (2) If you lose your way during the speech, you can take out the speech and read it. (3) You can pass out copies afterward to supporters and the media.
- **Make two drafts.** Write the first draft as fast as you can. Don't worry about grammar or how it sounds — just get it done. Take time in the second draft to improve it. Think of a catchy introduction and a powerful conclusion.
- **Practice until you have it down pat!**

[Click here to see *The Basics of Persuasion*.](#)

If you have an important point to make, don't try to be subtle or clever. Use a pile driver. Hit the point once. Then come back and hit it again. Then hit it a third time—a tremendous whack.

—Winston Churchill, (1874-1965),
British prime minister (1940-1945 and 1951-1955)



Delivering Your Speech

- **Arrive ahead of time.** You don't want to feel rushed or hurried.
- **Dress for the occasion.** In general, you should dress at least as well as your audience. Remember, first impressions make an impact on how others perceive you.
- **Before beginning, take a deep breath and smile.** This will help you to center yourself and appear less nervous to your audience. Make sure you also thank the person who introduced you.
- **Pick four people in different parts of the room to look at.** That way you will keep eye contact with the whole audience.
- **Speak conversationally.** It's okay to pause if you get stuck. Give yourself a chance to gather your thoughts before you speak again.
- **Avoid "Uh," "like," and "you know."** It's like, uh, distracting, you know, to the audience.



My father gave me three hints on speech-making: "Be sincere . . . be brief . . . be seated."

—James Roosevelt, son of President Franklin D. Roosevelt