



DELIVERING YOUR SPEECH

IN THIS CHAPTER YOU WILL LEARN TO:

- Use different types of delivery methods for a speech.
- Examine the verbal and nonverbal components of your speech.
- Develop skills for speaking at question-and-answer sessions.
- Identify ways to address feelings of nervousness that may accompany delivering a speech.
- Review the speeches of others to help you identify strengths and weaknesses in delivery.

12

Methods of Delivery

Verbal Components of Delivery

Nonverbal Components of Delivery

Question-and-Answer Sessions

Building Your Confidence as a Public Speaker

Sample Speeches

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Many celebrities are quite comfortable when they stand in front of an audience. What skills do you think most "every day" people need to deliver effective speeches?

People must first become aware of a situation and then must recognize their connection to it before they are likely to become involved.

—Joshua Howard, photojournalist/filmmaker, National Geographic Young Explorers Grantee



Stephen Morton/Getty Images

When you deliver your speech, you connect with and share your ideas with an audience. Because of the importance of delivery, this chapter covers the methods of delivery and the verbal and nonverbal components that will help you present your ideas in the most effective way. It also addresses question-and-answer sessions and ways to control the nervousness many of us feel when we give speeches. In the first section below, you will learn about four methods of delivery, the verbal and nonverbal components of delivery, and some strategies for rehearsing your speech.

Methods of Delivery

The four types of delivery we can use for public speaking are extemporaneous, impromptu, manuscript, and memorized. We now look at each method of delivery and the reasons for using it.



CourseMate Connection: Go to cengagebrain.com to access your CourseMate for *Invitation to Human Communication* to compare the differences between a speech delivered in a conversational style and one that is read. Watch the video of student speakers Shelley Weibel and Eric Daley. Which style of delivery do you think is more effective?

Extemporaneous speech

Carefully prepared and practiced speech from brief notes rather than from memory or a written manuscript.

Extemporaneous Delivery

Most of your speeches will be extemporaneous. When you give an **extemporaneous speech**, you present a *carefully prepared and practiced speech from brief notes rather than from memory or a written manuscript*. Because an extemporaneous delivery tends to be more natural than other deliveries, it is one of the more common methods. The advantages of extemporaneous deliveries are many. Your speaking outline or speaking notes prompt your ideas but do not allow you to read every word to your audience. Your eye contact and gestures are natural, and your tone is conversational. Finally, because extemporaneous deliveries encourage direct communication between the speaker and audience, it is easier to stay audience centered.

Delivery Tips Many beginning speakers worry they might forget their speeches if they use an extemporaneous delivery. However, the way to overcome this fear is not to write out every word of your speech but instead to add more keywords and phrases—not full sentences—to

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your outline. This way you will have more cues to aid your memory. Next, practice your speech often before you give it so you will feel more confident about what you will remember and want to say. Your goal is not necessarily to eliminate your fear by reading your speech but to give yourself tools so you can “talk” your speech.

The differences between an extemporaneous delivery and a speech read aloud to an audience are striking. An extemporaneous delivery follows a **conversational style**, which is *more formal than everyday conversation but remains spontaneous and relaxed*. In addition, with a conversational style, your posture and gestures are relaxed, and you make frequent eye contact with your audience (Branham & Pearce, 1996).

Impromptu Delivery

When you give an **impromptu speech**, you present a *speech that you have not planned or prepared in advance*. Although you may be wondering why anyone would do this—especially in light of the previous discussions

conversational style

more formal than everyday conversation but it remains spontaneous and relaxed.

impromptu speech

speech that you have not planned or prepared in advance.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN ACTION



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Alright, Hear This

Founded in 2001 by former Def Jam head Russell Simmons, the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN) is dedicated to using hip-hop as a catalyst for education and advocacy related to the well-being of at-risk youth. HSAN focuses on issues of community development, access to high-quality public education and literacy, freedom of speech, voter education, economic advancement, and youth leadership development. Since its beginnings, HSAN has sponsored several civic events such as its Smack-down Your Vote! campaign, which sought to register 2 million additional voters in 2004; its 2008 get-out-the-vote campaign to register “50K in one day” (with the Hip-Hop Caucus); and the 2009 national Hip-Hop Summit on Financial Empowerment titled “Get Your Money Right.” HSAN also works with the Recording Industry Association of America in support of the advisory labels that alert parents to explicit content in music. It has defended hip-hop culture before members of the U.S. Congress and such federal regulatory agencies as the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission.

HSAN also seeks to harness the immense popularity of hip-hop to educate others about hip-hop music and culture. “Once an underground, controversial style characterized by gangsta mythology and all-too-real turf wars,” says Nelson George, author of *Hip-Hop America*, “rap music is now embraced across the radio dial and across the nation by a diverse, multiracial fan base. . . . Rappers are pop stars, pop stars rap, and the sound is as integral to the cultural landscape as country music or rock.” HSAN’s goal is to use this mainstream success to encourage the recording

industry to establish mentoring programs and forums that will stimulate dialogue between artists, hip-hop fans, and industry leaders and promote understanding and positive change.

Recently, HSAN has been involved in a dialogue with the recording and broadcast industries about forming a coalition to recommend guidelines for lyrical and visual standards. In particular, it recommends that these industries “voluntarily remove/bleep/delete the misogynistic words *bitch* and *ho* and the racially offensive word *nigger*.” They maintain that these words are utterly derogatory and show a complete lack of respect for the history of suffering and oppression that women, African Americans, and other people of color have experienced in the United States. They are not advocating censorship. Rather, “we are consistent in our strong affirmation, defense, and protection of the First Amendment right of free speech and artistic expression. . . . Our discussions are about the corporate social responsibility of the industry to voluntarily show respect to [African Americans, other people of color, and to all women]” (Bode, 2007; Gamboa, 2007; “Hip-Hop Setting the Beat,” 2003; Smiley Group, 2006).

What Do You Think?

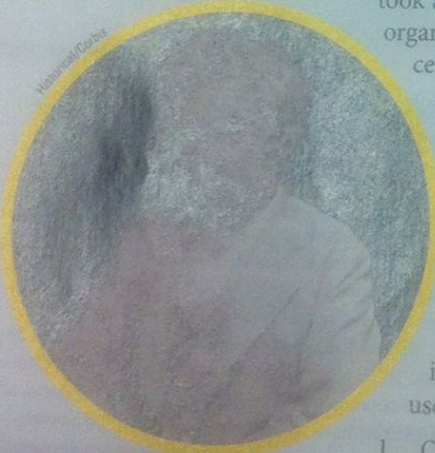
1. HSAN is recommending guidelines for the use of images and words in the entertainment industry. How useful do you think these guidelines will be?
2. How will you monitor your language and the images you use in your speeches? How do you think this will affect your audience?

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Dr. Benjamin Chavis, president and CEO of HSN during the Miami Hip-Hop Summit on Financial Empowerment.

Hulton/Corbis



American writer and speaker Mark Twain joked, "It usually takes more than three weeks to prepare a good impromptu speech." This is not true, of course, but with a few minutes of thoughtful organization, you can make it seem as if you took three weeks to prepare.

about the importance of preparation, planning, and practice—impromptu speaking is quite common. It occurs in meetings or public gatherings when someone is asked to speak or feels the need to share her or his perspective. When you decide to speak, you have the advantage of having a moment or two to organize your ideas. If you suddenly are asked to speak, you may not be able to jot down notes, but you still can organize your ideas. Consider the following scenario.

As a senior at the university, José was having trouble registering for the courses he needed to graduate. Enrollment on his campus was at an all-time high, and the number of majors in his own department had grown enormously. As a result, classes filled early. He expressed his frustration to his adviser, who suggested José attend a campus open forum on graduation requirements. José's adviser facilitated the discussion, and during the question-and-answer session, the adviser asked José if he would share his frustrating experiences with the audience. José paused and quickly organized his thoughts about his frustrations and how they related to the discussion. His speech was a success not only because it addressed the discussion directly but also because he was candid about his experiences.

José entered the public dialogue through impromptu speaking. He took a few seconds to organize his thoughts and then began. That quick organization gave him confidence and helped him deliver an audience-centered speech that was easy to follow. If you decide to give an impromptu speech, you may have time to make a quick speaking outline and jot down key ideas and points before you begin. However, if you have no time to make even a few notes as in José's case, you can quickly organize your ideas in your head before you begin to speak.

Delivery Tips Although you never have much time to prepare an impromptu speech, you can practice impromptu deliveries. In fact, your speech instructor likely will ask you to give several impromptu speeches. When you deliver an impromptu speech, use the following guidelines:

1. Quickly and calmly decide on the main points you want to make.
2. Introduce your main points as you would in a speech you had prepared in advance. Offer a preview such as "the three things I'd like to cover are" and use signposts such as "first."
3. Support your main points with subpoints and sub-subpoints.
4. Summarize your main points in a brief conclusion.

If you find yourself in an impromptu situation, stay calm. The skills you learn in your public-speaking course are invaluable for such situations. Even though you may be nervous, you have learned to organize ideas, relate them to the audience, and deliver various types of speeches. Remember, too, that when you give an impromptu speech, your audience does not expect elaborate source citations, fancy visual aids, or creative introductions. Members are looking for immediate clarity or guidance.

If you rely on the fundamental skills you have learned in your public-speaking course, then you can handle impromptu speeches successfully.

Manuscript Delivery

When you give a **manuscript speech**, you read to an audience from a written text. Although most speeches are best delivered extemporaneously, some speeches require a manuscript delivery such as the following occasions:

- when detailed and exact information must be reported carefully, such as to a professional board or a formal committee;
- when your speech will be scrutinized word by word, archived, and referred to later (for example, the president's address to the nation); and
- when your speech text will be used later for some other purpose (for example, a keynote address at a conference, which often is published).

A manuscript speech is one of the most challenging forms of delivery. Contrary to what most beginning public speakers think, speaking effectively from a manuscript requires more preparation and skill than extemporaneous or impromptu speaking (Hildebrandt & Stephens, 1963). Two problems are likely when a speaker reads from the full text. First, the speech often sounds like a written text and not an oral text, or a speech that "reads" well but doesn't "talk" well. Second, the speaker may be inclined to read to the audience rather than talk with them. There are some solutions to these problems, and we will explore those now.

Delivery Tips First, when you write your speech in manuscript format, the best way to avoid a written style is to talk the speech aloud as you write it. Working from your preparation outline, sit at your desk and speak the words as you write them on your computer or paper. If you find yourself thinking the speech rather than saying it aloud, go back and speak the part you have just written. You usually will notice that you have slipped into a writer's style instead of a speaker's style. Change the language in these sections to reflect spoken ideas rather than written ideas. Remember, your goal is to write a speech, not an essay.

The second problem with using a manuscript is the temptation to read the manuscript to the audience. This reduces your eye contact, and your words may sound wooden because you are reading. Finally, your delivery may be too fast because you are reading to rather than speaking with your audience.

The way to overcome the challenges associated with reading a speech is to practice speaking from the manuscript many times. If you become familiar with your manuscript during practice, you will find your natural

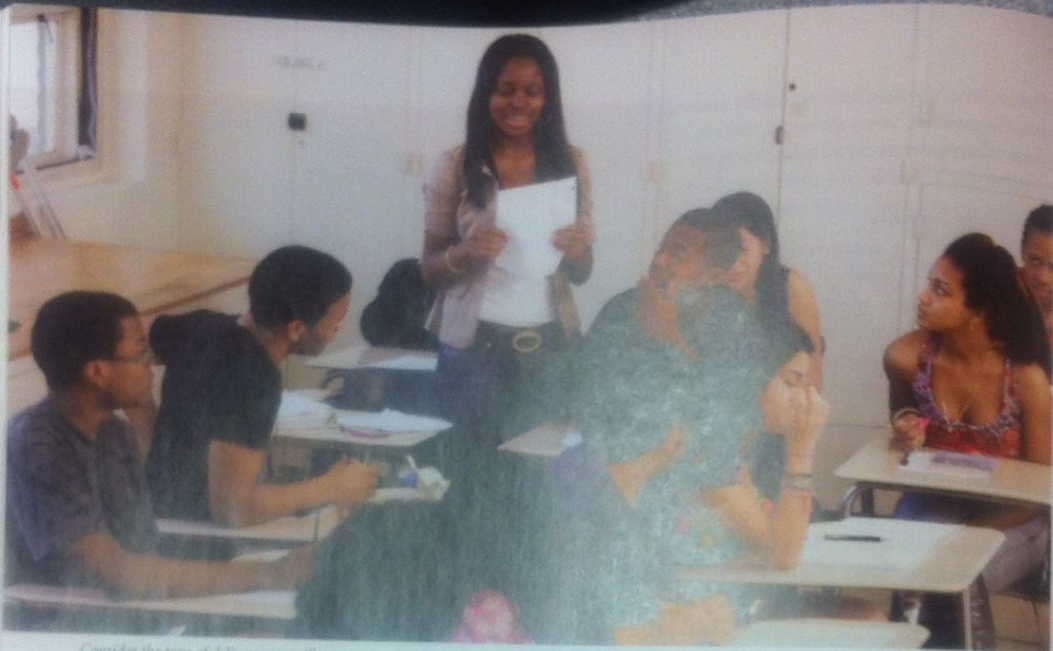
PRACTICING HUMAN COMMUNICATION

Comparing Delivery Methods

In class, take an item out of your backpack or from your pocket. Turn to the person next to you and give an impromptu speech about this item. Now find an example of something written—a paragraph in this textbook, the newspaper, or something online. Give another sixty-second "speech" reading the written material. With your partner, discuss the differences between the delivery styles. Which did you prefer to deliver? Which did you prefer to listen to?

manuscript speech

speech that is read to an audience from a written text.



Consider the type of delivery you will use for your next speech. What steps will you take to ensure this is the most effective delivery you can use? Use the following tips to help you prepare for your speech.

rhythm and conversational style. You will figure out where you can make eye contact with your audience easily for extended periods. Like your extemporaneous speeches, you will be able to deliver full ideas or subpoints without reading. You also will discover that you will want to slow down because, even though the words are in front of you, you feel comfortable enough to speak the words with feeling rather than rush through them.

Table 12.1 reviews the advantages and disadvantages of the three delivery methods.

TABLE 12.1 ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE THREE DELIVERY METHODS

	EXTEMPORANEOUS	IMPROMPTU	MANUSCRIPT
Definition	A speech that is carefully prepared and practiced from brief notes rather than from memory or a written manuscript.	A speech that is not planned or prepared in advance and uses few or no notes.	A speech that is completely written out and read word for word to an audience.
Advantages	Combines a conversational style with a speaking outline. Encourages careful organization.	Allows for a conversational style with few or no notes.	Helps present very detailed or specific information exactly as the speaker intends.
Disadvantages	Requires practice time. Speaker may be tempted to memorize the speech.	Requires thinking and organizing ideas quickly. No time for preparation.	Requires a conversational style that can be hard to achieve because the speaker reads from a full text.

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Verbal

A speech's success is determined by how they are delivered. For example, John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. used a variety of delivery methods to convey the meaning of their speeches. The proper articulation and consideration of delivery.

Volume

Volume is the loudness of the voice we want to speak. It is important to speak loudly enough to be heard by the audience, but not so loudly that it is uncomfortable. The volume of your voice should vary with each situation. For example, speaking in a loud voice is appropriate for a public address in the United States, but a softer voice is more appropriate for an American and African American audience. However, femininity, secretiveness, and Samovar & Portales.

Pay attention to your volume. If you are speaking from the back of the stage, make sure that they cannot hear you. If you use a microphone, make sure you are not speaking too loudly. The audience can hear you.

Rate

Rate is the speed of the speech. It is the rate at which the speaker speaks. He began his "I Have a Dream" speech at a rate that conveyed different feelings, such as excitement, or sadness, heaviness, or hope. The place in a speech where the audience members' attention is focused is your rate, recorded.

Verbal Components of Delivery

A speech's success comes not only from its words but also from how they are delivered. Speakers known for their delivery— for example, John F. Kennedy, Barack Obama, Ann Richards, and Martin Luther King Jr.—use **vocal variety**, or changes in the volume, rate, and pitch of a speaker's voice that affect the meaning of the words delivered. We achieve vocal variety by consciously using certain verbal components of delivery: volume, rate, pitch and inflection, and pauses. The proper articulation and pronunciation of words and a consideration of dialect are also important components of delivery.

Volume

Volume is the loudness of a speaker's voice. Common sense tells us that we want to speak loudly enough for our audiences to hear us but not so loudly that we make our listeners uncomfortable. Knowing just how loud to speak can be difficult because our own voice sounds louder to us than to the audience and because the appropriate volume varies with each situation. Culture also affects perceptions about appropriate speaking volume. For example, in some Mediterranean cultures, a loud voice signals sincerity and strength, whereas in some parts of the United States, it may signal aggression or anger. In some Native American and Asian cultures, a soft voice signals education and good manners. However, in some European cultures, a soft voice may signal femininity, secrecy, or even fear (Andersen, Hecht, & Hoebler, 2002; Samovar & Porter, 1991).

Pay attention to nonverbal cues from your audience to help you adjust your volume. If you are speaking without a microphone, watch people in the back of the room as you begin to speak. If they are giving you cues that they cannot hear, that is a signal to increase your volume. When you use a microphone, you still need to pay attention to your volume. Before you begin your speech, test your voice with the microphone and make sure you are the proper distance from it (neither too far nor too close) so the audience can listen comfortably.

Rate

Rate is the speed at which we speak. There is no formula for the proper rate at which to deliver a speech. For example, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., began his "I Have a Dream" speech at a rate of 92 words per minute and finished at a rate of 145 (Lucas, 2001). The rate at which we speak conveys different feelings. When we speak quickly, we project a sense of urgency, excitement, or even haste. When we speak slowly, we convey seriousness, heaviness, or even uncertainty. Both rapid and slow rates have their place in a speech. However, too much of one or the other strains audience members' attention and may cause them to stop listening. To check your rate, record yourself for several minutes. Play back the recording



The late Ann Richards, then governor of Texas, gave the keynote address at the 1988 Democratic National Convention. This speech and many others she delivered were almost always direct, humorous, gutsy, and memorable.

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volume

loudness of a speaker's voice.

rate

speed at which we speak

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC EXPLORER TIP

Alexandra Cousteau
Emerging Explorer and Social Environment Advocate

Do you vary the tone and complexity of each talk geared toward your audience?

Absolutely. Sometimes I'm speaking to audiences that are already knowledgeable about environmental problems, so it's a matter of shaping the conversation on water issues and issuing a call to action. Sometimes, though, the audience is not as engaged on the environment or may have opposing views to mine. Those audiences need a softer approach. So, yes, I think knowing your audience is really important because it helps you choose the right stories. I find that picking my stories wisely gives me a little door into their heart or into their mind—that they open up more easily to what I have to say if my stories ones they can relate to.



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and assess your speed. Remember, rate is an audience-centered concern. We want to engage our audience, and our rate of speaking helps us in this effort by communicating certain emotions or energies.

Pitch and Inflection

Pitch refers not only to the position of tones on a musical scale but also in public speaking as the *highness or lowness of a speaker's voice*. **Inflection** is the *manipulation of pitch to create certain meanings or moods*. Together, pitch and inflection help us communicate more effectively with our audience. Consider the word *well* and its different meanings when used in spoken language. The control of pitch and inflection allows us to say "well" in ways that suggest joyful surprise or indecision or indignation or caution. All speakers manipulate their pitch to create meaning during their speeches. All of us alter our pitch to ask a question, express satisfaction or displeasure, convey confidence or confusion, or even communicate threats or aggression. Variations in pitch clarify meaning and help catch and maintain our audience's attention.

Speakers who do not pay attention to their pitch and inflection risk losing their audience. *Speakers who do not alter their pitch* speak in a **monotone**. Other speakers may say everything in too low or too high a pitch. When a speaker says everything in a monotone or a low pitch, the audience senses a lack of interest or energy. When the pitch is too high for too long, every word is communicated with equal enthusiasm, or "excessive zeal," and the audience begins to wonder which points are the most important (Soper, 1956).

You can monitor your voice by recording yourself so you can hear your pitch. If your pitch is too high, practice breathing more deeply (from the abdomen rather than the throat) and relaxing your throat muscles as you

pitch

highness or lowness of a speaker's voice

inflection

manipulation of pitch to create certain meanings or moods

monotone

speaking without any change in pitch

Jose Gil/Shu

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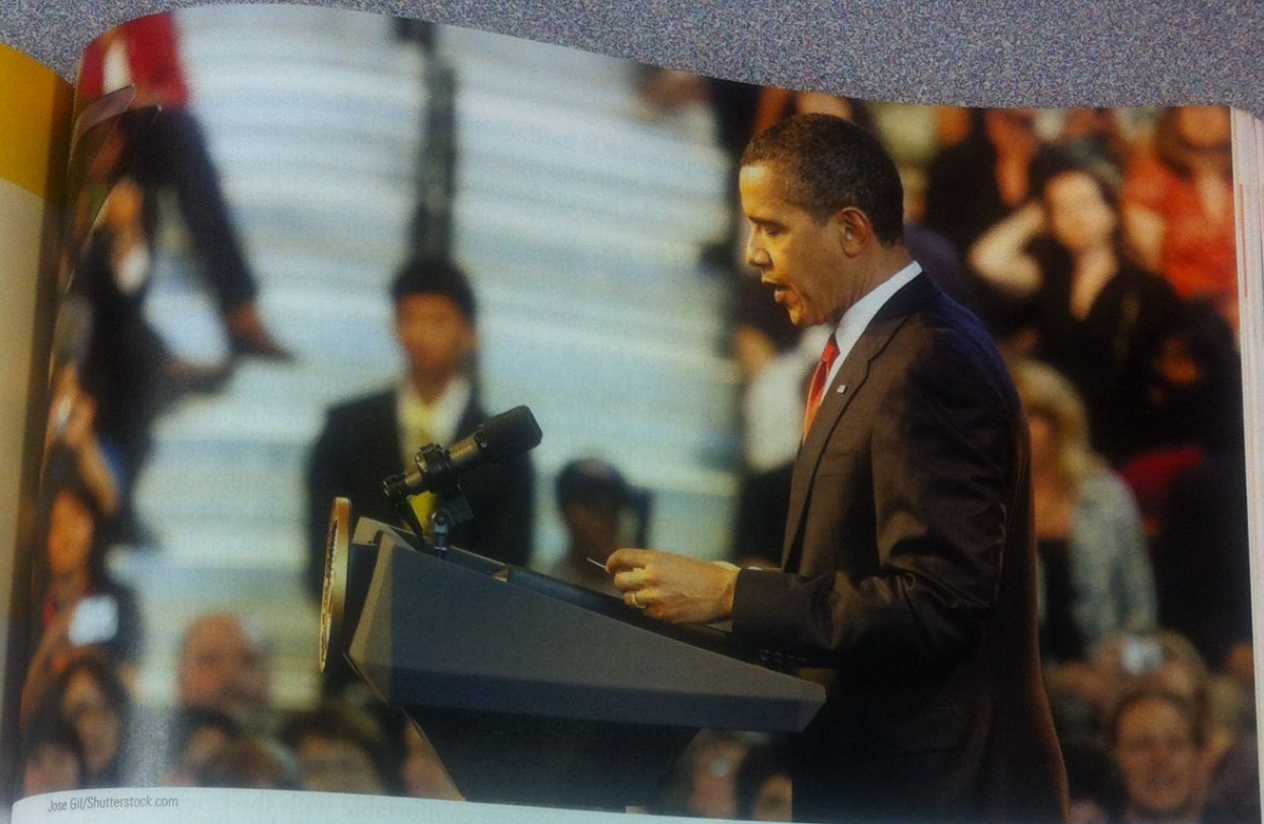
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Jose Gil/Shutterstock.com

speak. Speak from your diaphragm rather than your throat, and read aloud regularly to practice this technique until you can get your pitch to drop naturally. (Note that proper breathing also helps you increase the volume of your voice and project your voice farther.) If you speak in a monotone or in too low a pitch, practice delivering your speech (or reading something aloud) in an overly dramatic way, using inflection, exclamations, and vocal variation as much as possible. With practice, vocal variation will come naturally and carry over into public-speaking situations.

Pauses

Pauses are *hesitations and brief silences in speech or conversation*. In speeches, they often are planned and serve several useful functions. Pauses give us time to breathe fully and collect our thoughts during a speech or before we answer an audience question. Pauses also give audiences time to absorb and process information—they are like rest stops, giving the audience a breather before continuing. Finally, pauses before or after a climactic word or an important point reinforce that word or point.

Pauses can also add clarity. Read the passage here without stopping to pause after any of the words.

The back of the eye on which an image of the outside world is thrown and which corresponds to the eye of a camera is composed of a mosaic of rods and cones whose diameter is little more than the length of an average light wave.

President Obama is an example of a speaker who varies his pitch and inflection to keep his audience engaged. Practice your delivery with someone you trust, and ask her or him to evaluate your pitch and inflection before the day of your speech.

pauses

hesitations and brief silences in speech or conversation.

Without pauses, it is hard to understand what's being said here. Now read the passage again and note where you would naturally pause. Does the meaning of the passage become clearer?

The back of the eye
on which an image of the outside world is thrown
and which corresponds to the eye of a camera
is composed of a mosaic of rods and cones
whose diameter is little more than the length of an average light wave

The four pauses that make this passage easier to understand are after *eye*, *thrown*, *camera*, and *cones* (Soper, 1956). These are places in written text where we would add commas to indicate meaning. In written text, pauses often are indicated by punctuation, but an audience cannot see punctuation in a speech. Pause to punctuate your words, as well as to establish mood, indicate a transition, take time to reflect, or emphasize a point. For example, in his speech on the pollution caused by using fossil fuels, Preston used a pause to make a particular impact: "In fact," Preston argued, "according to the Southern California Edison Electric Transportation Web site, updated only last month, running for half an hour in urban air pollution introduces as much carbon monoxide into your lungs as [pause] smoking a pack of cigarettes."

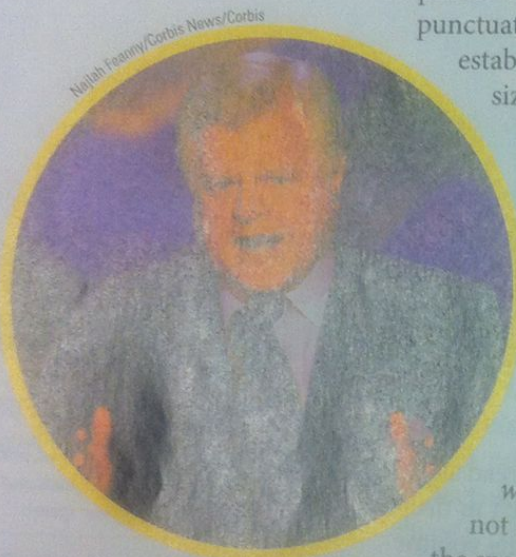
Learning the art of the pause takes time and practice. Before you become comfortable with the brief moments of silence necessary in a speech, you may have the urge to fill the silence. Avoid **vocalized pauses**, or *pauses that speakers fill with words or sounds like "um," "er," and "uh."* Vocalized pauses not only are irritating but also can create a negative impression of the speaker. When a speaker uses so many vocalized pauses that they intrude into an audience's awareness, listeners may begin to question the speaker's knowledge and speaking capabilities (Christenfeld, 1995). If you have a habit of vocalizing pauses, try the following process to eliminate them:

1. Listen for vocalized pauses in your daily speech.
2. When you hear one, anticipate the next one.
3. When you feel the urge to say "um" or "er" to fill space, gently bite your tongue and do not let the word escape.
4. Wait until your next word of substance is ready to come out and say that word instead.

It may take time to eliminate vocalized pauses from your speech, and you may feel awkward with the silence, but the results are worth the effort.

Articulation

Articulation is the *physical process of producing specific speech sounds to make language intelligible to our audiences.* Our clarity depends on our articulation—whether we say words distinctly or mumble and slur. Articulation depends on the accuracy of movement of our tongue, lips,



Senator Edward Kennedy was an inspiring speaker who was also known for a tendency to overuse pauses. If you are prone to using a lot of vocalized pauses, consider the four strategies noted in the text to help you eliminate some of them.

vocalized pauses

pauses that speakers fill with words or sounds such as "um," "er," and "uh."

articulation

physical process of producing specific speech sounds to make language intelligible to our audiences.

jaws, and teeth. This movement produces either “Didjago?” or “Did you go?” In fact, scholars of performance and delivery argue that poor articulation is a trend across all sectors of U.S. culture (Dowis, 2000; Gates, 2000; Martin & Darnley, 1996; Rodenburg, 2001).

Audiences expect public speaking to be more clearly articulated than private conversation. Speakers with an audience-centered focus care about clear articulation. Clearly articulated words communicate that you want your audience to understand you, which can add to your credibility. For your audience to understand your ideas, they must be able to decipher your words. To improve your articulation skills, try the following exercise:

1. Several days before your speech, select a part of your speech or a short written text you can read aloud.
2. Practice saying each word of your speech excerpt or text as slowly and clearly as possible, exaggerating the clarity of each word.
3. Repeat this exercise once or twice each day before you give your speech.

This exercise will help you recognize how much you slur or mumble and teach you to speak more clearly when you give your speech. Do not worry—you will not speak in this exaggerated way when you finally deliver your speech, but your words will be much clearer.

Pronunciation

Just as you would not turn in an essay you knew was filled with spelling errors, never deliver a speech filled with pronunciation errors. **Pronunciation** is the *act of saying words correctly according to the accepted standards of a language*. Pronunciation and articulation may seem similar, but pronunciation refers to how *correctly* a word is said, whereas articulation refers to how *clearly* a word is said. For example, saying the word *nuclear* as “nu-cle-ar” (correct) rather than “nu-cu-lar” (incorrect) has to do with pronunciation, and mumbling either pronunciation rather than speaking it clearly has to do with articulation.

Pronouncing words correctly communicates to your audience that you have listened carefully to the public dialogue going on around you. You have taken care to learn the common language and pronounce it correctly. In addition, correct pronunciation of terms and names in a language other than your native one communicates your respect for that culture and enhances your credibility.

Dialect

A **dialect** is a *pattern of speech shared by an ethnic group or people from specific geographical locations*. Dialects include specific vocabulary that is unique to a group as well as styles of pronunciation shared by members of that group. All people have a dialect, and your own dialect comes from your ethnic heritage as well as the place you grew up. For example, do you say “wash” or “warsh” when you want something clean? How about “soda,” “pop,” or “coke” when you want a soft drink? Your choices reflect your dialect.

pronunciation

act of saying words correctly according to the accepted standards of a language.

dialect

pattern of speech shared by an ethnic group or people from specific geographical locations.

People who use a standard American dialect (the dialect newscasters use when they are on the air) often forget that they, too, have a dialect, and they sometimes view the dialect of others as inferior. For public speaking, dialect is important because speakers need to consider the effect their dialect has on those who are unfamiliar with it. Speakers may use words that are not familiar to their audience or may pronounce words in ways that sound odd or different.

If you know your dialect will be unfamiliar to your audience, try the following:

1. Acknowledge your region of birth or ethnic heritage.
2. Talk about how that shapes your use of language by giving examples of some of the differences you have encountered between your dialect and those of your audience.
3. Define terms that are unfamiliar to your audience.
4. Soften the accent associated with your dialect if that accent is fairly strong and might hinder understanding.



Nonverbal Components of Delivery

The nonverbal components of delivery are those aspects communicated through our bodies and faces. For public speakers, these include personal appearance, eye contact, facial expression, posture, gestures, and proxemics.

Scholars of interpersonal communication recognize that nonverbal communication has a powerful effect on the meanings exchanged between people. Researchers suggest that between sixty-five percent and ninety-three percent of the total meaning of a message comes to us through nonverbal signals (Birdwhistell, 1970; Mehrabian, 1981). In addition, when nonverbal signals contradict verbal signals (for example, you say you are glad to see someone but your facial expression and physical posture suggest you are not), people tend to believe the nonverbal signals over the verbal ones (McCroskey, Sallinen, Fayer, Richmond, & Barraclough, 1996; Mino, 1996; Trees & Manusov, 1998; Wood, 1999).

For public speakers, nonverbal communication is especially important because it conveys meaning and can either enhance or detract from the overall message. We now look at how the components of nonverbal communication affect a speech.

Personal Appearance

Personal appearance, or *the way you dress, groom, and present yourself physically*, is an important part of delivery. But how important? Consider the following sayings:

You can't judge a book by its cover.

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

Looks are everything.

personal appearance

the way someone dresses, grooms, and presents her- or himself physically.

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Beauty is as beauty does.

You can never be too rich or too thin.

You can dress him up, but you still can't take him out.

Good-looking lawyers make more money.

Which statements are true? Does physical appearance matter, or is it irrelevant? Studies show that personal appearance actually does matter quite a bit. People deemed "more attractive" earn more money than their "less attractive" peers, and personal grooming plays a large part in our perception of a person's attractiveness for both men and women (Morris, Carham, Cohen, & Huffman, 1996; Rozell, Kennedy, & Grabb, 1989; Weiss, 2008). Attractive characteristics are defined as "those characteristics that make one person appear pleasing to another" (Hartz, 1996, p. 683; Morrow, 1990). Even though we may say we should not judge people by their looks, we actually do just that.

Without a doubt, standards for attractiveness and beauty change with generations, as well as with cultures and subcultures. Despite these differences, though, there is a basic standard for acceptable personal grooming in public-speaking situations. That standard is that the speaker's dress should be appropriate to the occasion (Herman, Zanna, & Higgins, 1986; Rubinstein, 2001). If the occasion is formal, then the speaker is expected to dress formally. If the occasion is casual, the speaker's clothing should be less formal. A speaker who shows up at a formal occasion in a T-shirt and shorts not only displays a lack of audience awareness but also is likely to lose credibility. Similarly, wearing formal business attire to speak at a casual gathering is also inappropriate. In short, be sure your clothing matches the style and tone of the occasion.

Personal appearance is a complex combination of social norms, cultural and generational influences, and personal style. Your personal appearance should match your objective as a speaker, which is to have your words and ideas taken seriously in the public dialogue. Delivery begins the moment the audience sees you, so pay careful attention to your personal appearance and present yourself appropriately for the occasion at which you are speaking.

Eye Contact

The second essential component of nonverbal delivery is **eye contact**, or *visual contact with another person's eyes*. Like personal appearance, appropriate eye contact is affected by culture and gender. Most North Americans and Western Europeans expect a speaker to make extensive eye contact. However, in Native American cultures, in Japan, and in parts of Africa, extensive eye contact is considered invasive and disrespectful (Gudykunst & Moody, 2002). Gender, too, affects the meaning of eye contact. For men, direct and extended eye contact with another man may be perceived as a challenge or threat. For women, direct and extended eye contact with a man may be interpreted as an invitation to flirt. So knowing what to do with our eyes as we deliver a speech depends on knowing who is in our audience.

Eye Contact

Visual contact with another person's eyes.

Even though the nuances of eye contact are complex, most cultures expect at least some eye contact during a speech. Eye contact has three functions. First, it is a way to greet and acknowledge the audience before the speech begins. Second, it is a way to gauge and keep our audience's interest. We use eye contact to monitor feedback from our audience and adjust our volume, rate, and pitch accordingly. Third, it is a way to communicate sincerity and honesty.

Audiences rate speakers who make eye contact for less than half their speech as tentative, uncomfortable, and even as insincere and dishonest (Palmer & Simmons, 1995). In contrast, speakers who make eye contact for more than half their speech are viewed as more credible and trustworthy (Beebe, 1974, 1979-1980; Cobin, 1963).

For eye contact to be effective, try to do two things as you look out at your audience. First, make eye contact with many people in the audience rather than a few friendly faces. Make eye contact with people in all parts of the room, not just those immediately in front of you. Gather information about level of comprehension, interest, and agreement from as many people as you can.

Second, look with interest. Rather than scanning faces in the audience or looking over listeners' heads to the back of the room, really look at individual people in the audience. Slow down the movement of your eyes so you actually make a connection with people through your eye contact. Looking with interest communicates that you are pleased to be speaking to your audience and are interested in members' responses.

Facial Expression

Your face plays a central role in communicating with audience members, letting them know your attitudes, emotional states, and sometimes even your inner thoughts. Your **facial expression** is the *movement of your eyes, eyebrows, and mouth to convey reactions and emotions*. Actors are highly skilled at using their faces to communicate, and audiences appreciate this talent. Although you do not need to be as skilled as an actor, you do need to consider your facial expressions as you deliver your speech. A poker face, although useful in a card game, will not help you communicate your ideas.

You can use your facial expressions to communicate your own interest in your topic, your agreement or disagreement with a point, your openness to an idea, and even your feelings about an issue. Take some time to decide which facial expressions might be useful to include in your speech. If these expressions do not come naturally to you, then practice them until you are comfortable delivering them.

Posture

Posture is the way we position and carry our bodies, and people assign meaning to our posture whether we realize it or not. We are perceived as confident and relaxed or tense and insecure based, in part, on our posture. A confident speaker is often called "poised," possessing assurance, dignity, and a sense of calm. Nervousness can affect our posture,

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making us feel awkward and act in ways we would never do in other situations: gripping the podium with both hands, slouching over our speaking notes, pacing back and forth, or standing stuck in one spot. These nervous reactions detract from our delivery and communicate a message we probably do not want to send (Bull, 1987).

But by paying attention during practice to the way we carry our bodies, we can eliminate some nervous postures. To become aware of your posture during a speech, practice your speech in the way you actually will give it. If you will deliver your speech standing, then practice it while standing. Consider devising a makeshift podium. If you are to sit while giving the speech, then practice while sitting, with chairs beside you and your notes on a table in front of you. Similarly, if you will use a handheld or attachable microphone, practice with something resembling it so you get the feel of speaking with a microphone.

By practicing the speech in the way you will actually give it, you can correct your nervous habits before you deliver the speech. For example, if you find that you pace or grip the podium tightly, you can replace the bad habit with a better one. If you discover you stand immobilized when you practice, then you can add cues to your speaking outline to remind you to move during your speech. If you slouch, you can practice sitting up straight and looking out at your audience. In sum, your posture during your speech should improve if you pay attention to your body during practice.

One final word about posture and delivery: Pay attention to the way you begin and end your speech. Wait until you are at the podium or have the microphone in your hand before you begin talking. Do not start speaking until you are facing your audience and have made eye contact. Similarly, do not walk off the stage until you have finished the last word of your conclusion. Finishing your conclusion or your final answer before you leave the spotlight communicates confidence and a willingness to give every word the attention it deserves. These guidelines will help you remain audience centered.

Gestures

Gestures are movements, usually of the hands but sometimes of the entire body, that express meaning and emotion or offer clarity to a message. Students of rhetoric in ancient Greece and Rome spent hours learning specific gestures to accompany specific parts of their speeches. For example, certain gestures were used with transitions, and others signaled specific kinds of main points or ideas. These choreographed gestures were used until the eighteenth century (Austin, 1966; Bulwer, 1974). Today, research on gestures in public speaking indicates that gestures should be as natural as possible rather than memorized.

However, beginning public speakers do not always know what gestures will appear natural in a speech. With only minor variations, natural gestures in a speech are the same as those you normally use in personal conversations to complement your ideas and bring your words to life. The same is true for public speeches. Gestures make our delivery lively,

gestures

movements, usually of the hands but sometimes of the entire body, that express meaning and emotion or offer clarity to a message.



The Dalai Lama is known for his engaging and genuine delivery. Watch a video clip of him speaking and assess whether his gestures contribute to his appeal as a speaker.

offer emphasis and clarity, and convey our passion and interest. Use the following tips to help you with gestures.

1. **Vary your gestures.** Try to use different kinds of gestures rather than repeating only one gesture. Some gestures emphasize (a fist on the podium), clarify (counting first, second, third on your fingers), or illustrate (drawing a shape with your hands in the air). Try to incorporate a variety of these gestures into your speech.
2. **Use gestures that fit your message.** Sometimes, a point needs an extravagant gesture; at other times, a more subtle gesture is much more effective. For example, use a relaxed pattern of hand movement as you explain a point but a larger more vigorous movement when you are emphasizing something quite important.
3. **Stay relaxed.** Your gestures should flow with your words. Try to keep your movements comfortable and effortless. If you find a gesture makes you tense, drop it from the speech and replace it with something more casual and familiar.

You will find that as you relax and gain experience speaking, you will stop thinking about your gestures and simply use them as you normally do in conversation.

Proxemics

Effective speakers pay close attention to **proxemics**, the *use of space during communication*. Be mindful of how far away you are from your audience as well as how elevated you are from it (for example, on a platform or a podium). The farther away you are, the stronger the idea of separation. The higher up you are, the more the idea of power is communicated.

You can work with proxemics in your delivery. One of the strengths of skilled speakers is their ability to move close to their audiences at key points during their speeches. Although you do not want to remain too close to your audience throughout your speech, getting close to them at key points allows for greater connection and communicates a desire to be perceived as more of an equal. Try stepping from behind the lectern or down from the podium and moving closer to your audience. If you cannot do this because you need a microphone or a place to put your notes, then you might be able to move closer during a question-and-answer session. Doing so will help you communicate openness and a willingness to engage in conversation with your audience.

Technology and Delivery

Technology refers to the tools speakers use to help them deliver their message. Technology can be as elaborate as a computer and a liquid crystal display (LCD) panel or as simple as a pen and a flip chart. Table 12.2 presents a list of technologies that speakers typically use. When you are thinking of using technology for your speech, stay audience centered by asking yourself the following questions:

- Have I asked what types of technology will be available for me to use?
- Do I have time to prepare the materials I need to use that technology?
- Do I have the time to practice using the technology? Have I worked out any glitches?
- Am I prepared to speak if the technology fails?
- Does the technology help me communicate my messages clearly? Does it enhance my speech or detract from it?

proxemics

use of space during communication

TABLE 12.2 TECHNOLOGIES FOR SPEAKERS

TRADITIONAL TECHNOLOGIES	ELECTRONIC TECHNOLOGIES
Podiums for notes	Microphones
Tables or easels for displays	Laptop computers and LCD projectors
Presentational aids such as posters	Overhead projectors and screens
Handouts	Slide projectors and screens
Chalk, chalkboards, and erasers	Presentational aids such as PowerPoint or Prezi slides
Ink markers, whiteboards, and erasers	Televisions, DVD players, and Smart Boards
Markers, pens, and flip charts	CD-ROM players
Tacks, pins, or tape	Audiocassette players

When you decide to use technology, you want to be sure you can use that technology competently. Consider the importance of this competence in the following example.

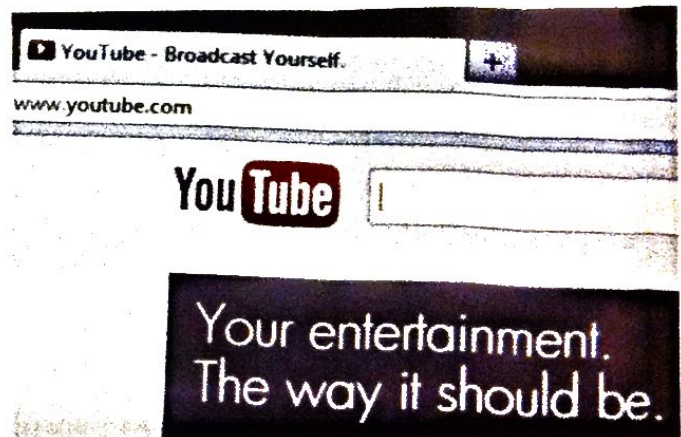
Mike wanted to include several YouTube clips into his speech. He identified the ones he wanted a day or two before he spoke, and he figured he could pull them up during his speech. When he set up his computer on the day of his speech, he had trouble getting Internet access, because the system was not running smoothly that day. After several tries, he was finally able to log on, but he could not locate his YouTube sites easily because he had searched for them by subject and failed to record the YouTube address. Then, because he was not familiar with the technology in the room, when he played his first clip, he discovered the volume on the projector had been turned off and no one could hear the clip.

SPEAKING VISUALLY



Social Commentary, YouTube Style

Providing a forum for people to connect, inform, and inspire others across the globe, YouTube acts as a distribution platform for original content creators and advertisers large and small ("YouTube Fact Sheet," 2010). YouTube allows its users to create their own videos and upload and manipulate their favorite movie clips, TV clips, and music videos. Created in 2005 by former PayPal employees Chad Hurley, Steen Chen, and Jawed Karim, YouTube is now immensely popular. Every day, people watch 2 billion videos and upload hundreds of thousands more to the site ("YouTube Fact Sheet," 2010). In 2009, *Entertainment Weekly* magazine put YouTube on its end-of-the-decade best-of list, summing up its appeal by describing the site as "providing a safe home for piano-playing cats, celeb goof-ups, and overzealous lip-synchers since 2005" (Geier, Jensen, Jordan, Lyons, & Markovitz, 2009). According to the *Boston Globe*, YouTube is also influencing a growing number of activists who use video imagery to speak their minds online. For example, when 23-year-old Elisa Kreisinger wanted to protest the lack of gay characters and story lines on television, she did not petition people to boycott HBO or write an angry letter to *The New York Times*. Instead, she remixed scenes from the TV and movie versions of *Sex and the City* into two pro-gay narratives and uploaded them to her blog, drawing 21,000 hits. "I wouldn't have done it if it was text-based," says Kreisinger. "Things are more easily communicated through video . . . And there can be more powerful statements" (Aucion, 2010, p. A1). The trend to use video to speak out about political and social issues has exploded recently, facilitated by Web 2.0 technology and inspired by the entertaining and informative videos created by video bloggers and *The*



Daily Show. "Making media now is a powerful way of participating in all kinds of life, including civic and political life," says Lee Rainie, director of the Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project. People in their teens and twenties "are now deeply connected to the political process in a way that their parents, at their age, could never be" (Aucion, 2010, p. A12).

What Do You Think?

1. Explore several YouTube clips that might help you communicate your message in your next speech. How might you incorporate them as you deliver your speech?
2. What issues might you begin to comment on via YouTube? Would those make good topics for your next speech?

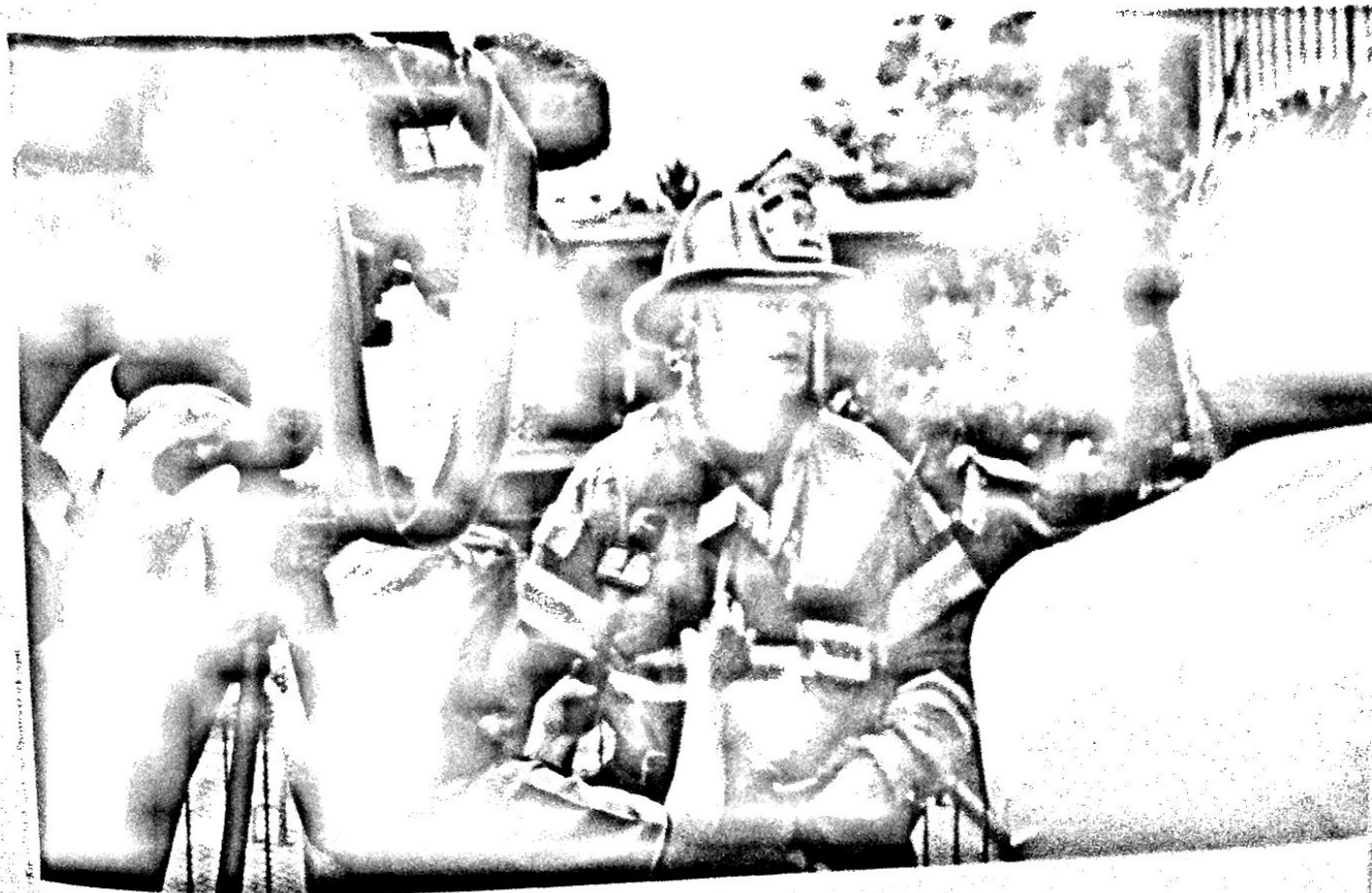
Mike did what he could to recover, but after his speech, he felt he had not really created the kind of environment he wanted. He wanted people to get excited by his material, but he felt they simply were patient with him instead.

Remember, although technology is a tool that can help you give a more effective speech, it has its drawbacks. If your speech relies on technology to be effective but the technology you need is not available when you arrive to speak, your presentation will be negatively affected. That is why you need to take the time to consider how to present your speech without technology. Putting this time into your speech before you give it will help you stay audience centered by keeping your attention focused on delivering your message to your audience in a way that they appreciate.

Question-and-Answer Sessions

Speeches often involve question-and-answer sessions. These sessions provide an opportunity for audience members to explore an idea or proposal in more detail, ask for clarity, and share their own perspectives. Even though you will not know for sure what to expect during question-and-answer sessions, there are ways you can prepare for them, and advanced preparation can make the difference between a mediocre question-and-answer session and a stimulating one. Ensuring a good question-and-answer session has two steps: preparing for potential questions beforehand and managing the discussion during the session.

Public figures such as firefighters often get interviewed for information about a cause. What sorts of questions might you ask a firefighter after a fire that would give you interesting information for a speech?



Preparing for Questions

You can do several things to prepare for the question-and-answer session. First, take time to identify the questions you think might be asked. Then prepare your answers to the questions.

Identify Potential Questions As you think about the topic under discussion, keep a log of the questions your audience might ask. Pay attention to the controversies or disagreements raised by the issue you are discussing to help you identify potential questions. If you can discuss the topic with others before the session, they can help you identify likely questions. Add these to your log of questions.

Formulate and Practice Answers After you have identified the questions you might be asked, prepare your answers as thoroughly as you can. Write out your answers, outline them, and record pertinent quotes, statistics, examples, or other data that support each answer. Although this may seem like a lot of extra work, it can give you the confidence you need to respond to your audience in respectful and audience-centered ways.

Although you cannot always anticipate the exact questions you will receive, you often can come close. You should be able to answer a question that is similar to one you anticipated by making minor adjustments to the answer you formulated. If some of the questions are likely to be controversial, then practice your answers in front of other people. They can help you with wording and organization as well as with adding and subtracting details.

As a rule, your answers to simple questions should be brief—between ten and sixty seconds in length. Answers to complex questions may take longer, but remember that you are answering questions, not giving a speech. Remember, too, that others are waiting to ask questions. If you spend all your time on one question, then you will prevent others from raising important issues.

Managing the Question-and-Answer Session

Several techniques will help ensure a productive question-and-answer session. They can help you manage the flow of conversation as well as keep an audience-centered perspective.

Explain the Format It is a good idea to establish the format of the question-and-answer session during the introduction to the session. You might want to establish a few rules, such as time limits for each question, the number of questions a person may ask, or rules to ensure that as many sides of an issue as possible are raised and discussed. Setting the rules will help all involved know what to expect and help you manage the flow of discussion ethically and effectively. Selecting a “process person,” someone who monitors the session and the rules you have established, can help ensure that the group follows the format you have set.

Listen and Clarify One of your most important tasks when managing a question-and-answer session is to listen thoughtfully to each question before answering in a respectful manner. This can be a difficult task if the question is unclear or hostile. When an audience member asks you an

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Alexandra Cousteau
Emerging Explorer and Soci

Do you have any tips for m-
presentation?

Practice, practice, practice. I died of shame. I was just five years old when I went to Berlin to attend the inauguration of my father, Philippe Cousteau, and then they led me to the Little did I know that they speech of appreciation. To remember feeling like I was never spoken in public but trembling; my legs felt like eternity until I was back in is something I really enjoy.

It's very rare for some-
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following tips may help:

1. Do not take the
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the facts or int-

Alexandra Cousteau
Emerging Explorer and Social Environment Advocate



Do you have any tips for managing nervousness before and during a public presentation?

Practice, practice, practice! I'll tell you, the first time I did a talk, I almost died of shame. I was just fifteen years old when my grandfather sent me to East Berlin to attend the inauguration of a high school that had been named after my father, Philippe Cousteau. I arrived and was taken on a tour of the school, and then they led me to the auditorium for a schoolwide inaugural event. Little did I know that they planned for me to get up on stage and give a short speech of appreciation. To this day, I have no recollection of what I said. I just remember feeling like I was going to pass out from extreme embarrassment. I had never spoken in public before, and it was a brutal introduction. My voice was trembling; my legs felt like spaghetti; the room started spinning. It felt like an eternity until I was back in my chair. But I survived it, and now public speaking is something I really enjoy.

It's very rare for someone not to have stage fright on their first attempt. The important thing is to know you want to say before you get up to say it. And you get better and more relaxed with practice.

unclear question, try to listen carefully for the keywords and important points. Then restate the question using this information so it is clear to you and ask the person if this is what she or he meant. Use such language as "If I understand the question, you are asking me . . . Is that correct?" or "I think what you're asking is . . . Am I right?" If you simply cannot make sense of the question, then you can always ask the person to repeat it for you.

When you are faced with a hostile question, it can be hard to understand what the person is asking. Hostile questions usually come from someone who feels threatened or believes you have not addressed his or her needs and concerns. Sometimes you can respond to the content of the question as well as acknowledge the emotion. This takes practice. The following tips may help.

1. Do not take the hostility personally. If you can, establish goodwill and common ground by identifying points of agreement, shared experiences, or common background with the members of your group.
2. Display an audience-centered perspective and communicate with civility as you respond. Responding civilly is more likely to decrease the hostility than an uncivil response.
3. Listen to the content as well as the emotional components of the questions being asked. Separate out the emotions and determine the facts or information you are being asked to provide.

4. Address your answer to the content of the question, not the emotion. Offer information that will clarify your ideas or position. In responding, also strive to reinforce an invitational environment (see Chapter 15) so you can explore an issue and get as many perspectives on it that you can. Try to explain rather than argue.
5. Offer evidence for your position. Use the skills you learned in Chapter 11 to present your ideas logically and reinforce your own credibility. Sometimes, the hostility can be reduced when you respond with strong evidence that supports your claims.

After you have tried these strategies, if you feel confident enough to do so, you can acknowledge the emotion attached to the issue. You want to be careful here, though, because many people do not like to be told how they feel. If you say something like "I understand the anger attached to this issue," the person may either appreciate the recognition or snap back with a retort about not being angry. As a rule, use caution when answering emotionally charged questions.

Keep a Positive Mind-Set Some beginning speakers are uneasy about question-and-answer sessions. One way to feel more confident about this part of a speech is to frame it positively. Most questions are signs of interest and curiosity—your listeners genuinely want to know more about a subject. A question-and-answer session gives people a chance to ask for additional information and allows you the opportunity to provide it.

Address the Entire Group Even though a specific person in the group has asked a question, keep your answer audience centered. First, restate the question so that everyone in the room can hear it. Second, deliver the answer to the entire group, not just to the person asking the question. These two actions bring the full audience into the conversation and help keep everyone interested. Usually, a question asked by one audience member is a question that others have, too. However, you occasionally receive a question whose answer applies only to the person asking it. When this happens, respond that the question seems to address the needs of only one person, and you will be glad to speak with him or her after the presentation. In doing so, you acknowledge the importance of the person, but not at the expense of the larger audience.

Answer with Honesty At some point in your speaking career, you will be asked a question for which you do not have an answer. Rather than trying to fake an answer or justify why you do not have one, be honest. Admit you do not know the answer. Then acknowledge the importance of the question, refer it to someone who may know the answer, or offer to try to find the answer after the session if it seems appropriate to do so.

Stay Focused Unlike a speech, which has a specific purpose and thesis statement, question-and-answer sessions can cover a wide range of ideas and perspectives, some of them only remotely related to the topic at hand. In addition, with many people asking questions, keeping track of

time and the flow of ideas can be difficult. However, you can do several things to keep the dialogue focused.

1. State how much time you have for the question-and-answer session. This will help your audience gauge the number of questions that members can ask and the amount of detail you can provide in your answers.
2. You occasionally will get a few people who try to dominate the session. They either ask repeated questions or use their question to engage in an extended monologue. When you can regain the floor, thank those people for their interest and ideas, and explain that it is important to hear from a variety of audience members. Then turn to other people with questions to keep the discussion moving.
3. Keep track of time, alerting the audience when the question-and-answer session has reached its midpoint as well as when the session is nearing its end. At these points, refocus the discussion, stating, "We've had a number of questions related to [this aspect of the topic]. Do we have any questions on topics we haven't covered yet?" In this way, you can make a space for people who have not yet been able to ask their questions.

Building Your Confidence as a Public Speaker

Even the most experienced speakers get a little nervous before they give a speech, so it is normal that you might feel a bit nervous, too. One reason we become anxious is that we care about our topic and our performance. We want to perform well and deliver a successful speech. Another reason we might be nervous before a speech is because we fear the unknown; we anticipate the speaking event and imagine that it will be stressful long before we actually give the speech. These are also normal, and it is helpful to know that there are ways to build your confidence as a speaker and reduce some of the nervousness you might feel.

Our nervousness before a speech is often called **communication apprehension**; it is the level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons (Finn, Sawyer, & Schrodt, 2009; McCroskey, 1977; Winters et al., 2007; Witt, Roberts, & Behnke, 2008).

Communication apprehension can take two forms. People who are *apprehensive about communicating with others in any situation* are said to have **trait anxiety**. People who are *apprehensive about communicating with others in a particular situation* are said to have **state, or situational, anxiety**.

communication apprehension

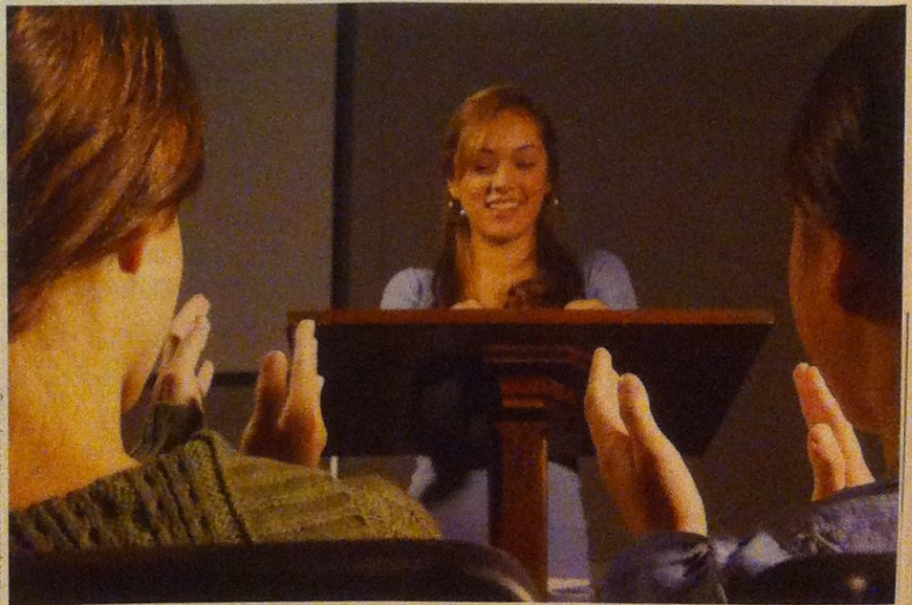
the level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons

trait anxiety

apprehension about communicating with others in any situation

state, or situational, anxiety

apprehension about communicating with others in a particular situation



Our confidence as speakers increases the more we give speeches. Consider the reasons you might be nervous about your speech and try to develop a plan to minimize some of your anxiety.

To help reduce your nervousness, take a moment to consider whether you are trait anxious or state anxious in communication situations. Do you fear all kinds of interactions or only certain kinds? Most of us experience some level of state anxiety about some communication events, such as asking a boss for a raise, verbally evaluating another's performance, or introducing ourselves to a group of strangers. This is quite normal.

Most people also experience some level of state anxiety about public speaking. This is called *public-speaking anxiety* (PSA), the anxiety we feel when we learn we have to give a speech or take a public-speaking course (Behnke & Sawyer, 1999; Bippus & Daly, 1999; Robinson, 1997). You can build your confidence and reduce some of your PSA by following the tips provided in this section. However, if you are extraordinarily nervous about giving speeches, see your instructor for special assistance with your fears.

Knowing why we become nervous before a speech can help us build our confidence. Research suggests that most people's state anxiety about public speaking exists for six reasons. Many people are state anxious because public speaking is

1. **novel**—we do not do it regularly and thus lack necessary skills;
2. **done in formal settings**—our behaviors when giving a speech are more prescribed and rigid than usual;
3. **often done from a subordinate position**—an instructor or boss sets the rules for giving a speech and the audience acts as a critic;
4. **conspicuous or obvious**—the speaker stands apart from the audience;
5. **done in front of an audience that is unfamiliar**—most people are more comfortable talking with people they know, and we also fear that an audience will not be interested in what we have to say; and
6. **a unique situation in which the degree of attention paid to the speaker is quite noticeable**—audience members either stare at us or ignore us, so we become unusually self-focused (Beatty, 1988; Bippus & Daly, 1999).

It helps to know that research also suggests people are usually nervous only about specific aspects of public speaking. When people ranked what they fear while giving a speech, they said the following (McCullough, Russell, Behnke, Sawyer, & Witt, 2006; Stein, Walker, & Forde, 1996; Witt & Behnke, 2006):

Trembling or shaking	80%
Mind going blank	74%
Doing or saying something embarrassing	64%
Being unable to continue talking	63%
Not making sense	59%
Sounding foolish	59%

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PRACTICING HUMAN COMMUNICATION

Building Your Confidence

With another member of your class, make a list of what makes each of you feel nervous about public speaking. Now sort this list into categories that reflect your view of yourselves as speakers, your audience, the process of developing your speech and presentational aids, and delivering your speeches. Identify which aspect or aspects of the public-speaking process generate the most anxiety for each of you. Discuss which techniques for easing public-speaking anxiety presented in this chapter might work best for you.

When we combine this research, a pattern emerges that helps us understand our nervousness. Because public speaking is novel and usually done in a formal setting, our nervousness can make us shake or tremble. Then when the spotlight is on us as the speaker, we fear our minds will go blank, we will say something embarrassing, or we will be unable to continue talking. Finally, we often do not know our audience well, which can make us fear evaluation, not making sense, or sounding foolish more than we ordinarily would. As you can see, some of our nervousness is legitimate. Even so, we can get past it and build our confidence as speakers.

The suggestions offered here should help you build your confidence and turn your nervous energy to your advantage.

Do Your Research

One way to build your confidence before giving a speech is to prepare as well as you can (Daly, Vangelisti, & Webber, 1995). Careful preparation will help you feel more confident about what you will say (and what others will think) and ease fears about drawing a blank or not being able to answer a question. Speakers who research their topics thoroughly before they speak feel prepared. As a result, they tend to be much more relaxed and effective during their presentations.

Practice Your Speech

You can build your confidence and reduce the nervousness associated with the formality of a speech by practicing. And the more times you practice, the more confident you can become. The following example shows how this can be done.

Randy was terrified to give his first speech. His instructor suggested a solution he reluctantly agreed to try. When no one else was home, Randy began to present his speech out loud and alone in his room. He then stood in front of a mirror and delivered his speech to his own reflection. After several horrifying attempts, he began to feel more comfortable. Soon after, he began to trust his speaking ability enough to deliver his speech to his older sister, whom he trusted to be kind and constructive. After doing this a few times, he asked her to give him honest feedback. Finally, he practiced once more in the clothing he planned to wear and delivered his speech in his kitchen, which he arranged so it resembled his classroom as much as possible.

When speakers practice their speeches before they give them, they become more familiar with the process of speaking and the formality of

the situation. As they gain comfort by practicing alone, they can move to rehearsals before an audience. They also have time to make changes in their presentation and smooth out the rough spots before they actually speak. This practice is part of a process known as **systematic desensitization**, a technique for reducing anxiety that involves teaching your body to feel calm and relaxed rather than fearful during your speeches. This technique can help you give successful speeches and build your confidence, thus breaking the cycle of fear associated with public speaking. Talk to your instructor if you would like to learn more about this technique (Kangas Dwyer, 1998, 2000; McCroskey, 1972; Smith & Frymier, 2006).

Have Realistic Expectations

A third way to build your confidence is to set realistic expectations about your delivery. Few speakers sound or look like professional performers. When real people give real speeches, they sound like real people who are invested in their topic and speech. So rather than worry about delivering a flawless performance, adjust your expectations to a more realistic level.

Remember, speakers pause, cough, rely on their notes for prompts, occasionally say "um," and even exhibit physical signs of nervousness, such as blushing or sweating. As we give more speeches, these "flaws" either go away or become less noticeable or we learn to manage them effectively. Here are a few realistic expectations for beginning speakers:

- Take a calming breath before you begin your speech.
- Remember your introduction.
- Strike a balance between using your notes and making eye contact with your audience.
- Make eye contact with more than one person.
- Gesture naturally rather than hold on to the podium.
- Deliver your conclusion the way you practiced it.

Practice Visualization and Affirmations

Sometimes, we increase our nervousness by imagining a worst-case scenario for the speech, and these images often stay in our minds. We have set up what is called a *self-fulfilling prophecy*: if you see yourself doing poorly in your mind before your speech, you set yourself up to do so in the speech. There are two ways to turn this negative dynamic around and build your confidence as a speaker: visualization and affirmations.

Visualization Visualization is a process in which you construct a mental image of yourself giving a successful speech. Research on the benefits of visualization suggests that one session of visualization (about fifteen minutes) has a significant positive effect on communication apprehension (Ayres & Hopf, 1985, 1989, 1990; Ayres, Hopf, & Ayres, 1994; McGarvey, 1990). The techniques of visualization are used by a wide range of people—athletes, performers, and executives—and can range

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technique for reducing anxiety that involves teaching your body to feel calm and relaxed rather than fearful during your speeches.

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from elaborate to quite simple processes. For public speakers, the most effective process works like this.

Find a quiet, comfortable place where you can sit in a relaxed position for approximately fifteen minutes. Close your eyes and breathe slowly and deeply through your nose, feeling relaxation flow through your body. In great detail, visualize the morning of the day you are to give your speech.

You become filled with confidence and energy, and you wear the perfect clothing for your speech. You drive, walk, or ride to campus filled with this same positive and confident energy. As you enter the classroom, you see yourself relaxed, interacting with your classmates, full of confidence because you have thoroughly prepared for your speech. Your classmates are friendly and cordial in their greetings and conversations with you. You are *absolutely* sure of your material and your ability to present that material in the way you would like.

Next, visualize yourself beginning your speech. You see yourself approaching the place in your classroom from which you will speak. You are sure of yourself, eager to begin, and positive in your abilities as a speaker. You know you are organized and ready to use all your visual aids with ease. Now you see yourself presenting your speech. Your introduction is wonderful. Your transitions are smooth and interesting. Your main points are articulated brilliantly. Your evidence is presented elegantly. Your organization is perfect. Take as much time as you can in visualizing this part of your process. Be as specific and positive as you can.

Visualize the end of the speech: it could not have gone better. You are relaxed and confident, the audience is eager to ask questions, and you respond with the same talent as you gave your speech. As you return to your seat, you are filled with energy and appreciation for the job well done. You are ready for the next events of your day, and you accomplish them with success and confidence.

Now take a deep breath and return to the present. Breathe in, hold it—and release. Do this several times as you return to the present. Take as much time as you need to make this transition (Ayres & Hopf, 1989).

Research on visualization for public speakers suggests that the more detail we give to our visualizations (what shoes we wear, exactly how we feel as we see ourselves, imagining the specifics of our speech), the more effective the technique is in building our confidence and reducing apprehension. Visualization has a significant effect on building our confidence because it systematically replaces negative images with positive images.

Affirmations Speakers sometimes undermine their confidence through negative self-talk; they listen to the harsh judgments that many of us carry within ourselves. When we think “I’m no good at this,” “I know I’ll embarrass myself,” or “Other people are far more talented than I am,” we engage in negative self-talk. We judge ourselves as inferior or less competent than others. Although it is natural to evaluate our own performances

critically (that is how we motivate ourselves to improve). Negative self-talk in public-speaking situations often is unhelpful. When our internal voices tell us we cannot succeed, our communication apprehensions only increase (Ayres, 1988).

To build your confidence, however, and counter the negative self-talk that might be going on in your head before a speech, use **affirmations**, *positive statements that assert that what we wish to be true is already happening*. To replace the negative self-talk with affirmations, try the following technique. For every negative assessment you hear yourself give, replace it with an honest assessment that you reframe to be positive. This technique, sometimes called **cognitive restructuring**, *is a process that builds confidence because it replaces negative thoughts with positive thoughts called affirmations* (Fremouw & Scott, 1979). Affirmations are positive, motivating statements. They are very helpful in turning our immobilizing self-doubts into realistic assessments and options. Consider the following examples.

affirmations

positive statements that assert that what we wish to be true is already happening

cognitive restructuring

process that builds confidence because it replaces negative thoughts with positive thoughts called affirmations

Negative

I don't know how to organize this material.

I know I'll get up there and make a fool of myself.

I'll forget what I want to say.

I'm too scared to look at my audience.

I'm scared to death!

I'll be the worst in the class!

Positive

I can find a way to present this effectively. I have a good sense of organization. I can get help if I need it.

I am capable of giving a wonderful speech. I know lots of strategies to do so.

I'll remember what I want to say, and I'll have notes to help me.

I'll make eye contact with at least five people in the audience.

I care about my performance and will do very well.

I'll give my speech well and am looking forward to a fine presentation. We are all learning how to do this.

Positive affirmations build confidence because they reframe negative energy and evaluations and shed light on your anxieties. To say you are terrified is immobilizing, but to say you care about your performance gives you room to continue to develop your speech. It is also a more accurate description of what is going on inside. Affirmations can assist you in minimizing the effects of your internal judgments and, along with visualization, can help build your confidence about public speaking.

Connect with Your Audience

A final way to build your confidence is to connect with your audience—getting to know them in class or gathering information about them before a more formal speaking situation. As you prepare your speech, identify what you know about them, the ways you are similar to audience

members, and the ways you might be different. The similarities may be as general as living in the same town or working for the same company or as specific as sharing the same views on issues. Whatever the level of comparison, finding out about your audience reminds you that we all share many aspects of our daily lives. This helps you see that, despite differences, we do share similar views and experiences.

You can also build your confidence by being a good member of the audience when others are speaking. Although this might seem unusual, ask yourself the following questions: When you are listening to a speech, do you make eye contact with the speaker? Do you sit with an attentive and alert posture, taking notes or showing interest in the presentation? Do you ask relevant questions of the speaker when the speech is over or offer constructive comments if you have the opportunity to evaluate his or her performance? Speakers who fail to behave as engaged and interested audience members often fear the very same response to their speeches.

One way to overcome this fear of disrespectful audiences is to behave as an audience member as you would want others to behave when you speak. Doing so helps establish rapport (if you are kind to a speaker, she or he likely will respond similarly to you). It also helps you learn about how to put together and deliver an effective speech.

The solutions offered in this section may help you reduce some of the speech anxiety so common to beginning public speakers. Preparing, practicing, being realistic, visualizing and affirming, finding connections, and modeling appropriate audience behavior are options that even experienced public speakers use to build their confidence. Learning to relax while giving speeches enhances your ability to contribute to the public dialogue.

Sample Speeches

CourseMate Connection: Go to cengagebrain.com to access your CourseMate for *Invitation to Human Communication*. To view a speech about self-introduction, watch Tiffany Brisco's speech. To view an informative speech, watch Cindy Gardner's "U.S. Flag Etiquette." To view an introduction using a narrative, watch Brandi Lafferty's opening story in her speech "Feeding the Wildlife: Don't Do It!"

PRACTICING HUMAN COMMUNICATION

Building Your Confidence

In a column, write down a list of negative statements that you typically think or feel about giving a speech. Next, create a second column and change each negative statement into a positive statement. Now identify which statements pertain to aspects of speech preparation, delivery, and audience feedback. Discuss as a class how speakers can build their confidence and how listeners can help assist the speaker in building confidence.



Chapter Summary

The Four Methods of Delivery Used by Public Speakers Are Extemporaneous, Impromptu, Manuscript, and Memorized

- Effective speakers use vocal variety in their delivery—changes in the volume, rate, and pitch of a speaker's voice that affect the meaning of the words delivered.
- Vocal variety is achieved when speakers adjust the volume, rate, pitch and inflection, pauses, articulation, pronunciation, and dialect throughout their speeches.

The Nonverbal Components of Delivery Are Those Aspects Communicated Through Our Bodies and Faces

- For public speakers, these include personal appearance, eye contact, facial expression, posture, gestures, and proxemics.
- Technology refers to the tools speakers use to help them deliver their message. Speakers use both traditional and electronic technologies in their speeches.

Speeches Often Involve Question-and-Answer Sessions

- Ensuring a good question-and-answer session has two steps: preparing for potential questions beforehand and managing the discussion during the session.

- When you prepare for the question-and-answer session, you do two things: identify potential questions and formulate and practice answers to those questions.
- When you manage the discussion, you explain the format before the session begins, listen attentively and clarify any potential misunderstandings, keep a positive mind-set, address the full audience when you offer answers, answer with honesty, and keep the session focused.

Our Nervousness Before a Speech is Often Called Communication Apprehension, and Speakers Can Have Trait Anxiety or Situational Anxiety

- Tips for managing speech apprehension are: do your research, practice your speech, have realistic expectations, practice visualization and affirmations, and connect with your audience.
- Speakers sometimes undermine their confidence through negative self-talk. To replace the negative self-talk, use affirmations—positive statements that assert that what we wish to be true is already happening.

Key Concepts

affirmations (324)	impromptu speech (299)	rate (303)
articulation (306)	inflection (304)	state, or situational, anxiety (319)
cognitive restructuring (324)	manuscript speech (301)	systematic desensitization (322)
communication apprehension (319)	monotone (304)	trait anxiety (319)
conversational style (299)	pauses (305)	visualization (322)
dialect (307)	personal appearance (308)	vocalized pauses (306)
extemporaneous speech (298)	pitch (304)	vocal variety (303)
eye contact (309)	posture (310)	volume (303)
facial expression (310)	pronunciation (307)	
gestures (311)	proxemics (313)	

Invitation to Human Communication Online

Speech Communication CourseMate includes an interactive eBook and interactive learning tools including National Geographic Explorer videos, student videos, quizzes, flash cards, and more. Speech Builder Express 3.0 and Speech Studio 2.0 are also available. Go to cengagebrain.com to access your CourseMate for *Invitation to Human Communication* where these resources can be found.

Further Reflection and Discussion

1. Identify speakers you consider to have good delivery. What characteristics make their delivery strong? How many of these characteristics might you incorporate into your style of delivery?
2. Identify the differences among extemporaneous, impromptu, manuscript, and memorized deliveries. What are the strengths and weaknesses of each type of delivery?
3. Write a quick speech and exchange the speeches among classmates. In groups, give that speech as though it were a tragedy, a surprise, or a hilarious story—or choose some other approach that will allow you to work on vocal variety. How well are you able to match the verbal aspects of your delivery to the mood you have selected?

Activities and Web Links

Visit cengagebrain.com to access the CourseMate for *Invitation to Human Communication* where these activities and web links can be found.

1. Listen to this brief portion of Randy Pausch's famous last lecture. How would you describe his delivery? What is most compelling about his delivery? Go to *Web link 12.1*.
2. Read or listen to Ann Richards's speech at the Democratic National Convention in 1988. What makes her delivery unique? How does she maintain her audience's attention? Go to *Web link 12.2*.
3. Read this article about Senator Edward Kennedy's speeches and delivery. Did his delivery hinder the effectiveness of his speeches? Why or why not? Go to *Web link 12.3*.
4. Read this article about Chicano dialect. What advice would you give to a classmate about what to tell the audience about his or her dialect? Go to *Web link 12.4*.