

Public Speaking Checklist

Whether you're new to public speaking or an experienced presenter looking to gain confidence in front of an audience, this checklist is for you. Use it as a guide as you prepare for and deliver your presentation. Tip: Practice is the key to mastering public speaking.



Create your presentation

- Start with a catchy opening, like a question to the audience or a short anecdote.
- Draft a list of key points you can reference as you deliver your presentation. This will help you avoid seeming scripted and free you up to look at and connect with your audience.
- Ensure you understand the material you share; don't just memorize or read. This will help you respond to questions and interact with your audience in real-time.
- Incorporate your personality and style into the presentation.



Practice, practice, practice!

- Plan where in your presentation you want to pause or increase your speed.
- Experiment with different tones, volumes, and voices — as if you're telling a story.
- Gesture and smile throughout.
- Record yourself delivering the presentation on your phone (so you can observe yourself) or practice it in front of a few peers, friends, or family members.
- Watch for filler words such as “like,” “um,” and “so,” and replace them with silence.
- Identify spots where your presentation drags and think about how to keep it engaging.



Prepare to speak

- Mingle with the audience.
- Review your notes one last time.
- Take deep breaths, stretch your jaw muscles, and shake out your nerves (literally).
- Think or say affirmations and encouragements to yourself. “I've got this!”
- Remember: People showed up because they want to hear what you have to say.



Deliver your presentation

- Use a podium to ground yourself, if you tend to rock or fidget.
- As you present, imagine you're speaking to the audience members you mingled with.
- Look up as much as you can. (This will be easier to do if you use your notes as a guide, not a script.) Either make eye contact or pick a few fixed points around the room to look at.
- Speak slower than you think you need to.
- Aim to use the hand gestures, tones, and pauses that you practiced.
- Smile!

Public Speaking Resources

Get more tips

- [How to Give A Killer Presentation](#) (Harvard Business Review)
- [Public Speaking Tips for an Introvert](#) (Toastmasters International)
- [Public Speaking: Tips for Day of Presentation](#) (MIT)
- [16 Public Speaking Tips for Students](#) (Very Well Mind)

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Watch pros

Example: [Do Not Negotiate Who You Are](#) (an excellent motivational speech from Brené Brown)

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Example: [Toastmasters International](#)

