

Preparing to Speak

Gaining the Audience's Interest

Think about how you will keep the audience interested. Plan an opening that will attract interest and direct attention to your topic. You can start with an icebreaker such as a controversial statement, a quotation, a personal anecdote, a question or a 'show of hands'.

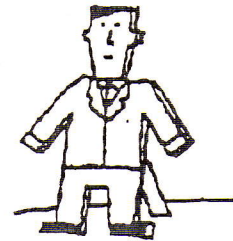
- Visual materials are a good way of stimulating audience interest.
- Humour brings the group over to your side. Make sure any joke or story you tell relates to your topic.

Some opening examples:

- *Suppose you had an experience like this . . .*
- *Three out of five people in this room will die of heart disease.*
- *Who can tell us roughly how many Australians drive to work every morning?*
- *If there are any monarchists in the audience, please raise your hands . . . now, how about republicans . . . ?*

Rehearse

- Rehearse beforehand and time yourself.
- Practice projecting your voice clearly. Vary your pitch and tone. A person who speaks in a monotone is boring to listen to.
- Be aware of body language and posture. Stand up straight. Use appropriate gestures to emphasise your points.
- When you are writing out your presentation, try to organise your information into main headings and supporting details or examples, much like an essay plan. If you know your topic well enough, you can give the talk from these headings and details. This technique prevents you from 'reading your talk' which is boring for your audience.



Delivery

- Don't read straight from your paper. This is boring for your audience. A tutorial is not a formal conference paper, but an introduction to a discussion. Try to express your ideas in your own words.
- Stand in a balanced position, facing the audience, feet apart.
- Speak clearly and try not to talk too fast. Nervous speakers tend to talk quickly, so try to slow down. Don't be afraid to pause.
- Maintain eye contact with your audience. It will help them concentrate because they will feel more involved. A good technique is to divide the audience into three sections (left, middle and right) and sweep your eyes across the room. If you don't want to look anyone in the eye, look at a point in the middle of their foreheads.

Performance Anxiety

Find a quiet place and take a few deep breaths. Concentrate on feeling your feet on the ground and remember that thousands of other students have been in the same situation and have survived. If you feel nervous, tell the tutorial group—they will understand. Remember, your audiences consist of your classmates and friends. They all want you to succeed, so try to relax.

Giving the Presentation

Tutorial Discussion

To begin the group discussion in the tutorial, it is a good idea to think of some questions that are relevant to your topic. At the beginning of your presentation, tell your audience that you will be asking some questions at the end of your talk to prompt a discussion. It sometimes keeps people more alert if they know that they may have to answer some questions based on what they have just been listening to.

You can hand out copies of the questions or put them on an overhead transparency. You can also provide a summary of your talk, or a list of the main points to help promote discussion. Distribute these at the end of your talk. If you give them out before your talk people may not listen closely because they already have the information.

