

Tips for People who Hate to Speak in Front of Groups

Fear of speaking in front of groups is one of the top fears of MOST people. If you feel anxious about getting in front of a group and delivering a speech, you are not alone. In fact, this fear or phobia is so common that it actually has its own name: Glossophobia. Follow these tips to decrease your stress when you give your speech.

1. Write a good speech that you will enjoy giving. In most cases, if you are interested in your topic, your audience will also be interested in your topic.
2. Create easy-to-read notes or note cards that you can take to the podium when you deliver your speech. Make sure you increase the font size on your notes and use highlighters to illustrate important points. (Caution: Do not read the speech!)
3. Practice your speech in front of your family and friends. You can also obtain additional practice by delivering your speech in front of a mirror. If it will help you to come in early and practice your speech in front of an empty classroom, come on in. I open my classroom at 6:15 AM, and you are welcome to practice your speech as I work on grade papers.
4. If you are nervous about giving a speech, memorize your speech. Your anxiety will decrease as soon as you start giving your speech.
5. Create a great PowerPoint that will capture your audience's attention so they look at the screen instead of looking at you. Bring a copy of the PowerPoint to load on my computer the day before your speech so you will not have to worry about technological problems.
6. If your hands usually become sweaty and shake or if you get a nervous stomach before a speech, refrain from drinking any caffeine that day.
7. Dress appropriately for the occasion. Do not wear something that makes you uncomfortable.
8. When it is time for your speech, walk to the podium and begin as quickly as possible. Do not sit at your desk and worry about your presentation.
9. Before you begin your speech, take several deep breaths and then remember to breathe normally during your speech.

10. Do not “lock” your knees. Locking your knees makes you light headed and can actually cause some people to pass out!
11. Look at friendly faces in the audience. Seeing a few smiles will help you relax and encourage you. If it makes you nervous to look at people, look right over their heads. That will make it appear that you are looking at people when you really are not.
12. If you make a mistake or lose your place, relax; we all make mistakes. Take a deep breath, check your notes, and begin again.
13. Remember that your audience wants you to do well, and I want you to do well. No one wants anyone to give a poor speech or get embarrassed. I would be ecstatic if the grades for all of the speeches were all A’s and B’s!

***Each time you get in front of the class and speak, it will get a little easier.
By the end of the semester, you will feel much more relaxed!***