



TRiO Student Support Services
South Dakota State University
You can go anywhere from here!

TRiO Student Support Services
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Public Speaking: Reducing Anxiety

- ☑ Remember that everyone has been in the speech-giving position before, and that fellow classmates have to do the same thing you are doing sooner or later.
- ☑ To break the tension just before and during the speech, **use humorous distractions.**
- ☑ **A common technique to reduce anxiety is deep breathing.** This is especially useful because it may be practiced hours before the speech in private or discretely just minutes before the event.
- ☑ **Use objectification or rationalization.** This refers to logically explaining the adverse physical effects of stress brought on by speech anxiety. For instance, try to explain to yourself that butterflies are a physical reaction (increased production of adrenaline due to stress interferes with digestion and makes the stomach contract) and not an emotional reaction (being scared to death).
- ☑ **Change your attitude and state of mind.** Act as though you are *not* scared, anxious, or nervous even though you are.
- ☑ **Visualize** yourself being relaxed, happy, and successful while preparing to give the speech.
- ☑ During the speech, **concentrate on nonthreatening faces in the audience or look at the tops of the people's heads.**
- ☑ **Channel excess tension.** Release extra energy and tension before the speech by exercising or using relaxation techniques. While waiting in the room to give the speech, try deep breathing techniques, yawning, or slightly lifting or pressing your chair to relieve pressure.
- ☑ **Select speech topics carefully.** One way to reduce stress is to select a speech topic that is interesting to you or that you know about already. When you are interested in your subject, that enthusiasm will come across in your tone of voice and expressions.
- ☑ **Be prepared.** Anxiety often arises because the speaker is unprepared or hasn't adequately practiced the speech. Prepare outlines, note cards, and visual aids well in advance.



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Public Speaking

- Consider time limits imposed for the speech.** Instructors do deduct points for falling short or exceeding time limits.
- Consider the audience.** The information presented in the speech should be tailored to the audience.
- Use visual aids and supporting materials.** All visual aids should be large, clear, colored, and relevant. Don't put too much information on any one visual aid.
- Prepare notecards.** If permitted, prepare notecards to serve as cues during the speech.
 - Don't put too much information on one card or you may find yourself fumbling to find your place on the card.
 - Avoid full sentences, except for quotes or other supporting material.
 - Number the cards to keep them in proper order.
- Rehearse the speech over and over again.** Practicing builds confidence, improves delivery, and helps one avoid reading the speech.
- Practice by recording your speech on a tape recorder.**
 - Are you speaking loudly enough? Too loud?
 - Are you saying the words clearly?
- Practicing in front of a mirror** is a good way to see how you deliver the presentation.
- Practice by giving your speech to someone you know.** Have them give you feedback.
- Time the length of the speech before you give your speech.** Is it too long? Too short?
- If visual aids will be used during the speech, be sure to **practice with the equipment.**
- Good posture is a must;** body language is very important in establishing credibility..

