

Matching Personal Style

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

When writing a speech, it's important to consider the complete context in which you plan to speak. From audience, formality, topic, and venue, each of these factor in how you deliver your speech. Your words, phrases, lines of reasoning, as well as the gestures and mannerisms you might use, will influence your personal speaking style. This lesson will cover:

1. Define Your Voice
 - a. Audience
 - b. Formality
 - c. Your Role in Relation to Your Audience
 - d. Attitude
 - e. Cultural Context
 - f. Your Own Creativity

1. Define Your Voice

As you craft your speech, you will naturally begin to adopt a tone and style as you write. Your personal style and tone is what's known as your voice. Your voice is what makes your writing and speeches unique from those of others.

Developing your voice, in particular honing what works for you and what you like, is something that develops over time. That said, there are other factors that shape your voice. Your voice should adapt to your speech as much as your speech is guided by your voice.

Here are six factors to which you must consider as you develop your voice in your speech.

1a. Audience

Who will be present at your speech? Who will be listening to what you have to say?

As you consider your audience, think of what their needs, goals, and expectations are of your speech. Adapt your tone appropriately to your audience.

1b. Formality

Are you presenting at an academic conference? Or are you giving the first toast speech at your best friend's wedding?

Consider the specific occasion, venue, and formality of your speech to make sure you're using the most appropriate phrasing, language, and wording. Formality will also dictate how you need to dress and appear before your audience.

1c. Your Role in Relation to Your Audience

Why are *you* there? What makes you the subject matter expert? As much as you're analyzing your audience, the audience is doing the same of you.

Your audience will have expectations and assumptions about you, so it's helpful to consider them before you ever step foot on stage so that you can adapt and tailor your style accordingly.

1d. Attitude

It's not just what you say, but how you say it. Your attitude will speak volumes to your audience, not only informing them about you as a person, but either bolstering or eroding your credibility as speaker.

Also, be aware that non-verbal cues, such as hand gestures, body stance, and posture can subconsciously betray your real attitude to your audience members, so always be mindful of your physical presence when speaking.

You don't need to be chipper and cheerful for every speech, but your attitude should reflect the other factors influencing your speech.

1e. Cultural Context

Just as when you were analyzing your audience, consider the cultural context of where and to whom you're speaking. Use your commonalities with the cultural context of your speech venue and audience to build bridges of understanding with your audience.

However, don't fall victim to **pandering** where you merely say things that reflect the overall needs and expectations of your audience without actually believing in them. Be authentic.



TERM TO KNOW

Pandering

The act of expressing one's views in accordance with the likes of a group to which one is attempting to appeal. The term is most notably associated with politics. In pandering, the views one is verbally expressing are merely for the purpose of drawing support and votes and do not necessarily reflect one's personal values.

1f. Your Own Creativity

At its heart, your voice is a reflection of you as a person. Let your creativity and the authenticity of your own words and experiences be the vehicle of your voice, guided by your gut. Over time, you'll know what sounds good and what works well in your speeches.

Incorporate these best practices into your speeches so that they become second nature. It is also helpful to

find volunteer readers for your drafts. Having a second reader or mock audience can help you identify areas that can be improved or emphasized, further honing your skills and personal style as a speech writer.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that **your voice** is ultimately a reflection of who you are as a person, and influences how your audience both perceives and receives you as speaker. Adapt your voice to the needs, goals, and, expectations of your **audience**. Additionally, consider **your role in relation to the audience**. Why are you there to speak to them? What makes you the subject matter expert? Don't forget to think about the **formality** and venue of your speech, as well as any relevant **cultural contexts** that may come into play. Your **attitude** speaks volumes to your audience. Make sure your attitude is appropriate to all the factors of your speech: topic, audience, and venue. Be aware that subconscious non-verbal cues can betray how you really feel. Don't be afraid to **get creative** and let your speech reflect your unique personality.

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