

Pauses

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WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn how to effectively use pauses when delivering a speech. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Pauses
 - a. Efficient and Effective Pauses
 - b. Ineffective Pauses
2. Tips for Speaker

1. Pauses

Pauses can enhance delivery or be filled needlessly and distract the audience.

A pause may refer to a rest, hesitation, or temporary stop. It is an interval of silence and may vary in length.

The speaker may use pauses to enhance the message delivery or fill the pauses needlessly and distract the audience from the message.



TERM TO KNOW

Pause

Pause may refer to a rest, hesitation, or temporary stop.

1a. Efficient and Effective Pauses



You may use a pause to emphasize that the information coming next is important, or to give the audience time to process what you have just said .

Consider some of the ways that you might use pauses effectively in your delivery.

1. Pause enables the speaker to gather thoughts before delivering the final appeal: pause just before the utterance, think about what you want to say, and then deliver your final appeal with renewed strength.
2. Pause prepares the listener to receive your message: pause and give the attention powers of your audience a rest. The thought that follows a pause is much more dynamic than if no pause had occurred.
3. Pause creates effective suspense: suspense can create interest. The audience will want to find out the conclusion or what happened if you pause before the punch line or conclusion.
4. Pause after an important idea: pausing gives the audience time to process what you have just said before you continue with your delivery.
5. Pause at the end of a unit: you may pause to signal the close of a unit of thought, such as a sentence or main point.

1b. Ineffective Pauses

Different types of pauses that could present problems for the speaker.

Speech disfluencies: Speech **disfluencies** are breaks, irregularities, or non-lexical vocables that occur within the flow of otherwise fluent speech, including false starts (words and sentences that are cut off in the middle), phrases that are restarted and repeated, grunts, or fillers like uh, erm, and well.

Filled pauses: Filled pauses are repetitions of syllables and words; reformulations; or false starts, where the speaker rephrases to fit the representation of grammatical repairs, partial repeats, or searching for words to carry the meaning.

Filler words: **Filler** words are spoken in conversation by one participant to signal to others that he or she has paused to think, but is not yet finished speaking. Different languages have different characteristic filler

sounds. The most common filler sounds in English are: uh /ə/, er /ɜr/, and um /əm/.

Today's youth uses other fillers. The following are among the more prevalent:

- y'know
- so
- actually
- literally
- basically
- right
- I'm tellin' ya
- you know what I mean

Placeholder names: Placeholder names are filler words like thingamajig, which refer to objects or people whose names are temporarily forgotten, irrelevant, or unknown.



TERMS TO KNOW

Disfluencies

Speech disfluencies are breaks, irregularities, or non-lexical vocables that occur within the flow of otherwise fluent speech. These include false starts, fillers, and repaired utterances (correcting slips of the tongue or mispronunciations).

Filler

A sound or word that is spoken in conversation by one participant to signal to others that he/she has paused to think but is not yet finished speaking.

2. Tips for Speaker

Record a conversation and count the use of unnecessary pauses and filler words in relation to the other words in the speech. See if you can reduce the ratio over time.

Remember that as you become more confident and familiar with speaking it will be easier to reduce the frequency of many of the unnecessary filler words and pauses.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about **effective and ineffective pauses**. You may use a pause to emphasize that the information coming next is important, or to give the audience time to process what you have just said. Repetitive, unnecessary pauses like speech disfluencies, filler pauses, false start - particularly filler words such as like, you know, and so - can distract from the message. An important **tip for speakers** is to record a conversation and count the use of unnecessary pauses and filler words in relation to the other words in the speech. See if you can reduce the ratio over time.



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