

Presentation

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WHAT'S COVERED

The delivery of your message may be just as important as the words you speak. There are a number of factors to consider when delivering your speech that can help or hinder your efforts to an effective overall presentation. This lesson will cover:

1. Appearance
2. Verbal Communication: Your Words and Ideas
3. Non-Verbal Communication: Your Body Language

1. Appearance

You may have heard the phrase, "Dress to impress." This couldn't be more true when getting up to deliver a speech. While some speech venues and settings might be more casual, chances are, you should be dressed in business attire. While fashion may change as quickly as the seasons, some basic tips regarding business professional or business formal attire hold true:

For men: A suit is a good staple for any business professional wardrobe. When in doubt as to just how formal or professional, stick with button-down shirts and add the tie (as cumbersome as it might be). If you can swing a blazer or suit coat, do it. If not, the tie is a good business formal backup. Hair should be neat and faces clean-shaven.

For women: What constitutes business casual versus business professional or formal is always changing, but a good rule of thumb is to keep your shoulders covered and skirts knee-length or longer. Dress and pant suits are usually acceptable as well as single-piece dresses. Avoid any plunging necklines. Keep the makeup to only what's necessary and hair should be neat. If you're comfortable in tall heels, go for it. Otherwise, choose a pair of shoes in which you are confident you can be sturdy when entering and exiting the stage as well as standing for the duration of your speech.

2. Verbal Communication: Your Words and Ideas

The actual words that you say certainly influence your presentation. Make sure that you rehearse often so that the words feel comfortable in your mouth as you speak them aloud.

Be on the lookout for phrases that might trip you up or leave you tongue-tied. Practice your speech in front of

another person or small group of people: ask them if what you're saying--from the ideas to which you're trying to get across to your phrasing, tone, and style--make sense to them.

3. Non-Verbal Communication: Your Body Language

Your **non-verbal communication** is equally as important as the words you have to say. Your body stance and posture and your eye contact (or lack thereof) can be crucial in making yourself relatable to your audience. You'll want to keep an assertive body posture: stand up straight and maintain eye contact when you can (if you're not reading from prepared remarks). Be mindful of gesture: don't overdo it, but don't stand there rigidly, either. Gesture and movement build visual interest for your audience. If you're able to get out from behind a podium or lectern, do so.



TERM TO KNOW

Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication is usually understood as the process of communication through sending and receiving wordless (mostly visual) cues between people. Messages can be communicated through gestures and touch, by body language or posture, by facial expression and eye contact.



SUMMARY

When considering your **appearance** for a speech, remember to "dress to impress"—when in doubt, go for business professional. It's better to be overdressed for a speech or presentation than underdressed. Your **verbal communication**, in how you phrase and intone your actual words, is vital to building auditory interest for your audience. Try to play with the pitch and tone of your speech; avoid speaking in monotone. From gesture to posture, your **non-verbal communication** via your body language also adds visual depth and engagement for your audience. Maintain eye contact. Don't wander around stage or gesticulate too much. Make your audience feel comfortable by being comfortable in front of them.

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