

Successful Rehearsing Habits: Mimic Timing and Context

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

In this lesson, you will learn further techniques for rehearsing your speech effectively. Specifically, this lesson will cover:

1. Practice with All the Parts in Place
2. Avoiding Mimicry
3. Timing
 - a. Timing Basics
4. Context
5. Tips for the Speaker

1. Practice with All the Parts in Place

Rehearsal is a time to experiment, to play, and to mold your speech. Once you are satisfied that you have crafted the speech into the message you want, then you can practice with all the parts in place to develop your own style and approach to delivery.



2. Avoiding Mimicry

As a speaker, you start with nothing but your idea or thesis to create and deliver your own message, whereas a mime recreates the character and dialogue that someone else invented. You should not be a mime who takes on a mask.

If you **mimic** the behaviors of other speakers, you run the risk of not having a delivery that is natural for you. You are not attempting to mimic an actor who is giving a performance, you are developing your own conversation with your audience.

However, if you are going to mimic, observe and mimic natural conversation. You are yourself, not an actor on a stage like **Thespis**; you want to focus on bringing out your own natural conversational style.



TERMS TO KNOW

Mimic

To imitate, to mock, or to pretend.

Thespis

The first person ever to appear on stage as an actor playing a character in a play instead of speaking as him or herself.

3. Timing

You should consider the basics of timing— the amount of time it takes to deliver the speech, how to time your use of visual aids such as Power Point slides for presentations, and your rate of delivery.

3a. Timing Basics

Generally, you will have a set amount of time to speak including Q&A. When rehearsing, you want to make sure to include all of the parts of the speech including quotes, examples, video clips, and visual aids. If you don't include all aspects of the speech, you may run out of time and have to cut short important content during delivery.

When working with PowerPoint, you can control when each slide is projected for the audience by pre-programming it to advance each slide while you speak. The timing from one slide to the next will occur as you have programmed it without you having to be near the computer to control the slides. However, you must speak about each slide for the rehearsed amount of time or your slides will not synchronize with the speech.

Timing is not only about knowing how long you are going to speak, but also about how fast to speak, when to pause, and how long to pause to achieve the desired effect. You can vary the rate of speaking and the use of pausing to achieve different vocal effects as you practice.

4. Context

Context includes not only the physical environment, but also the technological and situational context. Ultimately, context includes the entire world, and the cultural and linguistic background of the audience and speaker.

Physical or environmental context: Ideally you want to rehearse in the same space using the same equipment you will use for your presentation. If you rehearse in the same space, you will learn to appreciate the special features of the room and the layout.

Technological context: It is important to include equipment use when you rehearse. What equipment is in place? Will you be speaking directly to an audience or will you be using amplification? Will the audience be co-located with you face to face or will you be using teleconferencing equipment?

Situational context: It is important to note any special background about the room, place, or occasion. Consider and acknowledge any special significance the place may have for you or your audience. For example, did someone else recently speak in the same location that will influence how the audience will respond to your speech?

5. Tips for the Speaker

1. Speak in a conversational style. Do not talk at your audience; pretend you are talking with your audience.
2. Rehearse just as you plan to present and, if possible, in the same location that you will deliver your speech.
3. Prepare for interruptions and questions. Make sure to leave room for a Q&A session at the end of your speech.
4. Rehearse with your graphics and coordinate them to your talk. Display them only when you are talking about them.
5. Time the individual parts and the total speech with a stopwatch and make sure to have a clock that you can

see while speaking.

6. Make sure you record and listen to your speech after rehearsal and get feedback from friends or a coach.
7. During your final rehearsal, make brief notes for yourself so you know how long each point in the speech takes. Then mark your outline accordingly so you know if you are spending too much time on any given point during delivery.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned that rehearsal is a time to experiment, to play, and to mold your speech. Once you are satisfied that you have crafted the speech into the message you want, then you can **practice with all the parts in place** to develop your own style and approach to delivery. **You are not attempting to mimic** an actor who is giving a performance. Rather, you are developing your own conversation with your audience. However, if you are going to mimic, observe and mimic natural conversation.

Consider the amount of **time** that it takes to deliver the speech, how to time your use of visual aids such as Power Point slides for presentations, and your rate of delivery. Consider the physical environment, the technological and the situational **context**, as well as the larger world of the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the audience and speaker. Speak in a conversational style. Do not talk at your audience; pretend you are talking with your audience. An important **tip for speakers** is to rehearse just as you plan to present. If possible, rehearse in the same location that you will deliver your speech.

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