

SPEAKING

Speaking is the delivery of language through the mouth. To speak, we create sounds using many parts of our body, including the lungs, vocal tract, vocal chords, tongue, teeth and lips. It is an act of making vocal sounds. We can say that speaking means to converse, or expressing one's thoughts and feelings in spoken language.

Speaking can be formal or informal:

- Informal speaking is typically used with family and friends, or people you know well.
- Formal speaking occurs in business or academic situations, or when meeting people for the first time.

Speaking is the second of the four language skills, which are:

1. Listening
2. ***Speaking***
3. Reading
4. Writing

In our own language, speaking is usually the second language skill that we learn. The four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing are all interconnected. Proficiency in each skill is necessary to become a well-rounded communicator, but the ability to speak skillfully provides the speaker with several distinct advantages.

Importance/Advantages of Speaking Skill

The capacity to put words together in a meaningful way to reflect thoughts, opinions, and feelings provides the speaker with these important advantages:

• ***Ability to inform, influence, and express.*** Speaking clearly and confidently can gain the attention of audience, providing the golden opportunity for the speaker to make the message known. Wise is the speaker who gains and then holds the attention of an audience, with well-chosen words in a well-delivered presentation, forming a message that is effective, informative, and understood.

• ***Ability to stand out from the rest.*** When one thinks of speaking skills, one tends to think of it as a common skill. The ability to stand before others and speak effectively is not an ordinary ability. The speaker whose skills are honed and developed with constant application and hard work can stand out.

• ***Ability to behave with confidence.*** Well-developed verbal skills can increase one's negotiation skills. Self-confidence is improved. A growing sense of comfort comes from speaking in front of larger and larger audiences.

• ***Career enhancement.*** Employers have always valued the ability to speak well. Speaking skills are important for career success, but certainly not limited to one's professional aspirations. Speaking skills can enhance one's personal life; thereby bringing about the well-rounded growth we should all seek.

What makes a good speaker? / Qualities of a good speaker

- ***Correct vocabulary:*** The learner must choose the **correct vocabulary** to describe the item sought.
- ***Right Emphasis:*** Rephrase or emphasize words to clarify the description.
- ***Appropriate Facial expressions:*** The speaker must show appropriate facial expressions to indicate satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the service.
- ***Use of proper stress and intonation:*** The producing of sounds must be with proper stress patterns and intonations of the language.
- ***Correct grammar:*** Good speaking demands use of grammar structures accurately.
- ***Assessing the characteristics of the target audience:*** The characteristics include status and power relations of participants, interest levels and differences in perspectives.
- ***Selection of appropriate vocabulary:*** Vocabulary that is understandable and appropriate for the audience, the topic being discussed and the setting in which the speech act occurs.
- ***Employ strategies:*** The speaker must choose different strategies to enhance comprehensibility, such as emphasizing key words, rephrasing, or checking for listener comprehension;
- ***Gestures or body language:*** Gestures and body language plays a very important role in the making of a good speaker.

- ***Interaction and adjusting components:*** Paying attention to the success of the interaction and adjusting components of speech such as vocabulary, rate of speech, and complexity of grammar structures to maximize listener comprehension and involvement.

Techniques for organized training in good speaking:

Speaking is perhaps the most demanding skill for the teacher to teach. In their own language children are able to express emotions, communicate intentions and reactions, explore the language and make fun of it, so they expect to do the same in English. There are limitations because of their lack of actual language. You cannot expect to be able to predict what language the children will use. You will always find that children will often insert their native language when they can't find the words in English.

It is important to find the balance between providing language through controlled and guided activities and at the same time letting them enjoy natural talk.

Controlled oral work: In controlled practice there is little chance that children can make a mistake. The main objectives of Controlled Oral work is to let children overcome their shyness and practice on individual sounds.

Examples of controlled practice:

Telling the time

What is the time?

It is _____.

Activities like these provide the basis for the oral work, but do not always produce real language at once. The purpose is to train children to use correct, simple, useful language within a situation or context. Learners may have to repeat sentences, be corrected and go through the same thing several times.

Guided oral work: Guided practice follows on directly from controlled practice and will often be done either in pairs or in small groups. Guided practice usually gives the pupils some sort of choice, but the choice of language is limited.

For example:

What's the time?

Chain work?

It is like controlled oral work but here the learner needs to substitute

Free oral Reproduction - Comprehension comes before the ability to produce language. Stephen Krashen referred to this time as "the silent period", also known as pre production, this silent period might last anywhere from several weeks to a year. During this period, instructors must provide their students with diverse language experiences and provide cues to support comprehension. The topics for Free Oral Production may include:

- Explaining why they did something
- Expressing opinion
- Using common social greetings.
- Discussing current events or topics of interests.

Presentation Skills to enhance students speaking ability

Debates, group discussions, role-play, simulation and extempore speech are effective strategies for to enhance speaking skills. These presentation skill serve as a means of developing self-confidence, conviction and fluency in speaking. Speaking in public is not something that most people enjoy, and it can make them self-conscious and hesitant. At the school level students need to be given practice in speaking in front of an audience by organising speaking activities such as debates, extempore speech, group discussions, etc. It also helps you make students aware of the conventions of non-verbal communication such as gestures and eye contact.

Debate

Participating in a debate is good preparation for public speaking. Taking part in a debate not only develops students' self-confidence, it teaches them to think logically, articulate clearly and responds effectively — all of which are effective oral communication skills. It also teaches students to listen attentively to a debate in order to learn how to respond effectively.

Group discussion

At college level and beyond, when students apply for placements or jobs, one of the requirements for selection is a **group discussion**, popularly referred to as a **GD**. In a GD, several candidates are put in a group and asked to share opinions on a topic. Their responses are monitored by examiners, who may or may not take part in the discussion themselves. Candidates are judged by their ability to initiate and conclude a discussion, make their opinions heard, speak audibly with good pronunciation and grammar, and behave politely.

At the school level, students are rarely exposed to the norms of a GD. Although in the classroom teachers do place students in groups for discussion, it is difficult to monitor all the groups at the same time, and the focus is mostly on the topic being discussed rather than the norms of speaking. In this activity students practise the skills they need to take part effectively in a GD. It may need several classes to complete this, depending on the number of students but each session will benefit the entire class.

Speaking extempore

At the Secondary School level, one of the most popular co-curricular activities is extempore speech, where students are asked to speak spontaneously (extempore) on a topic of general interest for four or five minutes. Speaking extempore requires both language proficiency and presence of mind. Unlike normal conversation, there is no time to think of a response, no break and no clue from the listeners. In addition, the speaker has to stand before an audience and speak at length, formulating ideas and presenting them logically instantly. All this requires both confidence and familiarity with a wide range of vocabulary and structures.

Role –Play

Role-play is any speaking activity when you either put yourself into somebody else's shoes, or when you stay in your own shoes but put yourself into an imaginary situation! The joy of role-play is that students can 'become' anyone they like for a short time! The President, the Queen, a millionaire, a pop star.. the choice is endless! Functional language for a multitude of scenarios can be activated and practised through role-play. 'At the restaurant', 'Checking in at the airport', 'Looking for lost property' are all possible role-play. It is widely agreed that learning takes place when activities are engaging and memorable. Role-play is important as :

- It's fun and motivating
- Quieter students get the chance to express themselves in a more forthright way
- The world of the classroom is broadened to include the outside world - thus offering a much wider range of language opportunities

In addition to these reasons, students who will at some point travel to an English-speaking country are given a chance to rehearse their English in a safe environment. Real situations can be created and students can benefit from the practice. Mistakes can be made with no drastic consequences.

Simulations

Simulations are very similar to role-plays but what makes simulations different than role plays is that they are more elaborate. In simulations, students can bring items to the class to create a realistic environment. For instance, if a student is acting as a singer, she brings a microphone to sing and so on. Role plays and simulations have many advantages. First, since they are entertaining, they motivate the students. Second, as Harmer (1984) suggests, they increase the self-confidence of hesitant students, because in role play and simulation activities, they will have a different role and do not have to speak for themselves, which means they do not have to take the same responsibility.

Story Telling

Students can briefly summarize a tale or story they heard from somebody beforehand, or they may create their own stories to tell their classmates. Story telling fosters creative thinking. It also helps students express ideas in the format of beginning, development, and ending, including the characters and setting a story has to have. Students also can tell riddles or jokes. For instance, at the very beginning of each class session, the teacher may call a few students to tell short riddles or jokes as an opening. In this way, not only will the teacher address students' speaking ability, but also get the attention of the class.

In all the above-discussed activities the teacher should, apart from vocabulary and grammatical structures, see the other features of speech such as:

- Fluency
- Good pronunciation
- Clarity of speaking; that is, clear delivery in an audible voice and comfortable pace of speaking
- Knowledge of the topic
- Willingness to listen to others' point of view
- Politeness and pleasant personal behaviour
- Ability to use humour
- Ability to maintain eye contact
- Ability to take listeners logically through their speech by using appropriate discourse/semantic markers.

Some tips for Public speaking

1. Nervousness Is Normal. Practice and Prepare!

All people feel some physiological reactions like pounding hearts and trembling hands. Do not associate these feelings with the sense that you will perform poorly or make a fool of yourself. Some nerves are good. The adrenaline rush that makes you sweat also makes you more alert and ready to give your best performance.

The best way to overcome anxiety is to prepare, prepare, and prepare some more. Take the time to go over your notes several times. Once you have become comfortable with the material, practice—a lot. Videotape yourself, or get a friend to critique your performance.

2. Know Your Audience. Your Speech Is About Them, Not You.

Before you begin to craft your message, consider whom the message is intended for. Learn as much about your listeners as you can. This will help you determine your choice of words, level of information, organization pattern, and motivational statement.

3. Organize Your Material in the Most Effective Manner to Attain Your Purpose.

Create the framework for your speech. Write down the topic, general purpose, specific purpose, central idea, and main points. Make sure to grab the audience's attention in the first 30 seconds.

4. Watch for Feedback and Adapt to It.

Keep the focus on the audience. Gauge their reactions, adjust your message, and stay flexible. Delivering a canned speech will guarantee that you lose the attention of or confuse even the most devoted listeners.

5. Let Your Personality Come Through.

Be yourself, don't become a talking head—in any type of communication. You will establish better credibility if your personality shines through, and your audience will trust what you have to say if they can see you as a real person.

6. Use Humor, Tell Stories, and Use Effective Language.

Inject a funny anecdote in your presentation, and you will certainly grab your audience's attention. Audiences generally like a personal touch in a speech. A story can provide that.

7. Don't Read Unless You Have to. Work from an Outline.

Reading from a script or slide fractures the interpersonal connection. By maintaining eye contact with the audience, you keep the focus on yourself and your message. A brief outline can serve to jog your memory and keep you on task.

8. Use Your Voice and Hands Effectively. Omit Nervous Gestures.

Nonverbal communication carries most of the message. Good delivery does not call attention to itself, but instead conveys the speaker's ideas clearly and without distraction.

9. Grab Attention at the Beginning, and Close with a Dynamic End.

Do you enjoy hearing a speech start with “Today I’m going to talk to you about X”? Most people don’t. Instead, use a startling statistic, an interesting anecdote, or concise quotation. Conclude your speech with a summary and a strong statement that your audience is sure to remember.

10. Use Audiovisual Aids Wisely.

Too many can break the direct connection to the audience, so use them sparingly. They should enhance or clarify your content, or capture and maintain your audience’s attention.

Practice Does Not Make Perfect

Good communication is never perfect, and nobody expects you to be perfect. However, putting in the requisite time to prepare will help you deliver a better speech. You may not be able to shake your nerves entirely, but you can learn to minimize them.