

Our goal in E103 is to significantly improve each student's public speaking skills. There are many elements to a great speech, but this week we focus on the fundamental of delivery. Great delivery skills are the most basic way of appealing to your audience and getting positive feedback. Because you may feel nervous beginning public speaking, we address nervousness at the end of these notes. The truth is, however, that the audience sees your outsides and not your insides, so our primary focus is on appearance. The way to appear confident, comfortable, and knowledgeable is to follow the key elements of delivery: ***Stance, Gestures, Voice, and Eye Contact.***

Stance:

In E-103, we emphasize the importance of the ***“Ready Position”***:

This form of stance is built on a solid foundation of your feet being approximately shoulder-width apart with your toes pointing towards the back center of the room. Your weight is evenly balanced and you stand with good posture. Your hands are at your side.

The ready position is not the most exciting stance but it accomplishes one of the most difficult parts of successful delivery: control over your body. **Being able to control your body and stand in the ready position is the first step towards having great body language.**

A common question that arises about the ready position is, “What do I do with my arms?” You should be able to stand in front of an audience for an extended amount of time without doing anything with your arms. Start by letting them hang naturally at your sides. This gives the audience the impression that you are relaxed. Occasional gestures should be employed to break the monotony of the ready position.

Gestures:

Gestures are useful because they can help communicate and punctuate ideas. Moreover, they assist your memory (it is often easier to recall the content of your speech by associating it with specific gestures). Your choice of gestures should depend upon the type of image you want to have, be it sharp, commanding, professional, casual, or conversational.

Guidelines:

- **Gesture big.** When you are on stage speaking, the whole stage is yours, so act like you own it. Keep your gestures above your waist. Relax your shoulders and gesture with your ENTIRE ARM, rather than gluing your elbow to your side or penguin flapping with your hands at your side.
- **Gesture meaningfully.** Each gesture you make should have a distinct purpose. Avoid distracting mannerisms (playing with change, fidgeting, etc.). When not gesturing, keep your hands at your side and in the ready position.

Voice:

One of the most fundamental elements of delivery is your voice. Your **tone** of voice and its **volume** play a critical role in demonstrating credibility and confidence. Speaking too softly or too quickly will make you appear nervous. Speaking too loudly can also have the same undesired effect. Consequently, you should aim to speak at a moderate pace and volume.

Guidelines:

- **Project.** The goal is to be speaking in a loud talking voice. Speak a bit louder than you would during a normal conversation and remain below yelling.
- **Speak slowly.** Speaking too quickly will make you appear more nervous; slow down to enhance your credibility and to display confidence. Take deep breaths to relax and slow to an appropriate pace.
- **Pause.** Pauses add emphasis, drama and clarity to your speech. Pausing also shows that you are in control of your speech and its timing, which is a great display of confidence.

Eye Contact:

Eye contact is one of the most important components of professional public speaking because it establishes credibility and reinforces authority and trust.

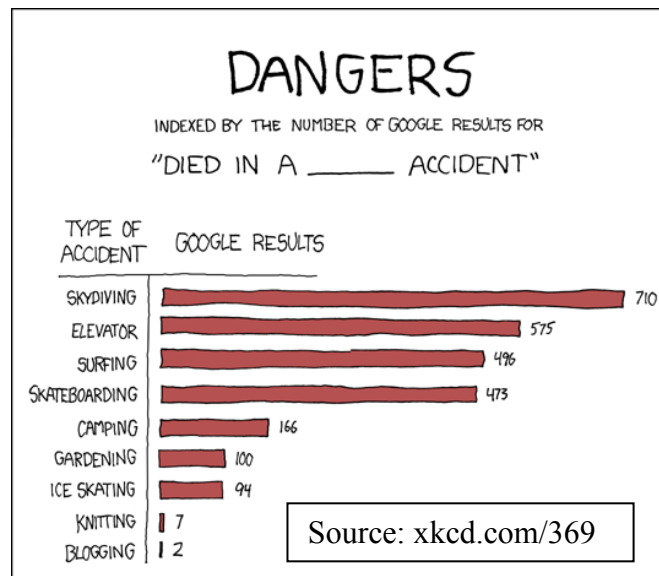
Guidelines:

- **Always look at the audience**, and never at the ceiling, your shoes, or the door.
- **Spread out your eye contact.** Do not constantly look at the same spot in the audience.
- Hold individual eye contact up to **3-5 seconds per person**. Shifting your eyes too quickly works against your attempt to connect with the audience.
- **Use eye contact to pull you to where you are going.** For example, when you want to move to the right side of the room, first establish eye contact with someone over there and then walk towards them.
- Your eyes do not act alone. **Use the rest of your face** to augment your delivery. Smile, frown, yawn, or do whatever else will help emphasize your point.

Conclusion:

The Four Elements of Delivery, *Stance, Gestures, Voice, and Eye Contact* combine to make your speeches seem credible and confident. We will cover other aspects of delivery such as movement and visual handling later in the quarter. Until then, please focus on developing a natural, solid-looking stance and utilizing gestures rather than visual aids to emphasize your points. Most importantly, **practice speaking in the “Ready Position”** before coming to class next week. Although this stance *feels* unnatural, it looks very natural. Mastering that kind of control over your body will be one of the most rewarding aspects of E-103.

Nervousness:



Public speaking may be scary, but it is not very dangerous.

You may be nervous to begin with. You will learn how to deal with it. **Everyone get nervous.** The greatest performers, not just in public speaking, but in sports, acting, and politics, are nervous before they perform. They have learned how to realize that nervousness is just another word for excitement. **Getting nervous about something just means that you care about it.** Some techniques for overcoming nervousness are:

- **Go First.** If you are one speaker in a series, going first will ease your nervousness. Waiting will just delay the inevitable, increase your nervousness, and not allow you to enjoy the other speakers.
- **Make a friend.** If there's time before your speech, chat with someone in the audience. Making friends with people in the audience will not only make them more receptive to your speech, but also give you the confidence that someone out there is on your side. At the very least, chatting will give you something to do besides fretting over your impending speech.
- **Breathe.** Begin by exhaling absolutely all air from your lungs. Either sitting or standing, have your back straight and your feet about shoulder width apart. Keep your eyes on one spot and place your hands on your chest or stomach. Then, through your nose, slowly and smoothly inhale while counting to five. Then exhale gently through your mouth. Repeat 3-5 times and feel the air travelling through you. Focus on your breathing and nothing else, not even your speech.

- **Visualize.** Mentally rehearse giving a speech while giving your brain strong positive images of success. If this is difficult, imagine a role model public speaker and play through the scene until you are comfortable with it, then put yourself in the position of the successful public speaker. Preparing your mind for the physical act of public speaking will lead to positive results. Your expectations are self-fulfilling prophecies.
- **Have it in your back pocket.** Know your speech inside and out, and then put a copy of your outline or notes in your back pocket when you deliver. Actually reading from notes is not allowed in E103 and is strongly discouraged otherwise, but putting a hard copy of your notes in your back pocket can give you the confidence in knowing that you are well prepared.
- **Gain Experience!** Michael Jordan said, “I’ve missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I’ve been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”

Do not worry about being nervous. Instead, **realize the importance of practicing great delivery skills.** If you deliver with great skills, you will get positive feedback. That positive feedback will then be anchored to the way that you physically delivered your speech, so when you use those skills again the next time, you will feel more confident. The key is practicing your effective delivery skills.

