

Delivering Your Speech

Practice ... practice ... practice!

- Practice your speech over and over, especially the introduction and conclusion. They're most remembered by the audience.
- Practice difficult words like proper names. Clear pronunciation is a must.
- Practice giving your speech to a variety of audiences – classmates, family members, friends, etc. You'll connect better with your contest audience if you've had experience speaking to different groups.

Be enthusiastic and confident!

- Think of the audience as friends – they're on your side. Share your message and help them understand what you have to say.
- Try to relax. The most experienced speakers get nervous – they just don't show it.
 - Imagine you've just said to a friend, "Hey, listen to this!" Begin your speech in that same enthusiastic tone of voice.
 - Move a little. Take a few steps away from the podium.



- Gestures can help you describe how something works, looks, or moves; how big or small it is; and can illustrate certain words like "split." All body and hand movements should be natural, not forced.
- Unless you're gesturing, rest your hands on the podium, fold them in front of you, keep them by your sides or put them behind your back. Avoid touching your hair, your clothing, your jewelry, etc.
- Maintain eye contact throughout your speech. Pick some friendly, interested faces and shift your gaze from one to another – a few seconds on each.
- Pausing can emphasize something you want the audience to think about or remember. It's better to pause than use fillers like "uh" and "um," which could make you appear nervous. You'll seem more at ease if you speak slowly and pause at times.
- Watch your posture. Stand up straight, keep your shoulders back and your chin up – you'll breathe easier and look better.