

Speaking skills

Introduction:

Speaking:

Speaking 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. To speak often implies conveying information. It may be from an informal remark to a scholarly presentation to a formal address.

Speaking skills:

- Speaking skills are the skills that give us the ability to communicate effectively.
- These skills allow the speaker, to convey his message in a passionate, thoughtful, and convincing manner.
- Speaking skills also help to assure that one won't be misunderstood by those who are listening.

Description:

Speaking is the productive skill in the oral mode. It, like the other skills, is more complicated than it seems at first and involves more than just pronouncing words.

There are three kinds of speaking situations in which we find ourselves:

1. interactive,
 2. partially interactive, and
 3. Non-interactive.
- **Interactive speaking situations** include face-to-face conversations and telephone calls, in which we are alternately listening and speaking, and in which we have a chance to ask for clarification, repetition, or slower speech from our conversation partner.
 - Some speaking situations are **partially interactive**, such as when giving a speech to a live audience, where the convention is that the audience does not interrupt the speech. The speaker nevertheless can see the audience and judge from the expressions on their faces and body language whether or not he or she is being understood.
 - Few speaking situations may be totally **non-interactive**, such as when recording a speech for a radio broadcast.

In all the above explained conditions speaking is always a headache for most of the people. Although the fear of speaking is common, studies show that ability to speaking can be enhanced by improving speaking skills.

What to do before speaking?

The first step to speaking is to think and the first step to perfect speaking is to think positive. Good speakers have the ability to quickly analyze and absorb the information given to them, assess it fast and to make a decision and communicate that decision to other. Keep in mind to:

1. Be an active listener:

The key ingredient towards making you a person who can think on the spot and respond intelligently is to be an active listener. This means listening carefully and giving your full attention to the words, tone, emotion and logic behind what the other one is saying.

2. Be a quick organiser of thoughts:

All of us have the ability to think fast. The trick is to adopt some frameworks or models to structure new information into something coherent that we can respond with. One can break down issues or ideas into past, present and future.

3. Structure your speech in your mind:

These are useful frameworks to organise ideas and thoughts quickly.

The basic structure of any speech involves:

- Opening
- Body
- Conclusion

It is very useful in delivering speeches and especially for speaking in situations such as table topics during meetings or other times when called upon to "say some words". Thinking before speaking is important for us to add value in terms of communicating our thoughts, ideas and feelings. We can touch lives through deeds and we can touch lives through speech.

Speaking Skills:

Some speaking skills are:

1. Be prepared and practice.

The more you know what you want to say, the better you'll get at it. First, brainstorm the topic of your speech and research it, if you need to. Write down all the points you want to make and then organize them into an outline. Then, practice your speech out loud at least 3 to 5 times.

2. Know your audience.

The better you know your audience or listeners, the easier it will be to connect to them as you speak. When you are able to make that connection, you'll hold their attention.

3. Pay attention to the old KISS principle, that is, Keep It Short and Simple.

When you are speaking don't beat around the bush or try to impress with complex metaphors. Stories, however, can be a powerful public speaking tool, especially when they contain at least a hint of humor. But again, keep them short and on point. Shorter messages leave more impression. They're also easier for your audience to remember.

4. Interact with your audience.

Lectures will rarely have the same impact on an audience that an open discussion will. Look for opportunities to involve your audience in what you are speaking about. Ask for validation of points you are making ("Am I right?" "Has that ever happened to you?") Or allow time for questions. Also, make sure to establish eye contact with your audience, and keep it throughout your speech.

5. Speak with sincerity and passion.

When a person wants to leave a lasting impression with the audience about one's topic then be sure that you are true to yourself and your topic as you speak. Don't be afraid to inject enthusiasm and passion into the speech as well.

6. Close your speech in a memorable way.

Give your audience something to think about as you finish up your speech. Certainly, it's a good idea to summarize your main points one more time, but then finish up with an inspiring story or quote, or leave them with a thought provoking question.

7. Fluency

The main goal is fluency. Remember that one don't have to know many complex grammatical structures to achieve that goal! First of all try to speak as fluent as possible (even making some grammar mistakes). Then, after making one's speaking fluent, one can focus on grammar aspects.