

PRESENTATION TIP SHEET



INTRODUCTION TIPS

The introduction is a very important part of your presentation. It is your time to capture the audience's attention, and familiarize them with your topic. The introduction helps set the tone for the rest of your presentation. To help plan your introduction, you should write a purpose statement about what you want the audience to learn from your speech. You can then use this information to help you plan an appropriate introduction.

There are many ways to start a speech. Here are a few options:

- **Ask your audience a question.** This will get the audience to start thinking about your topic.
- **Tell a story.** Begin with a personal or fictional story to gain audience interest.
- **Use a starter.** Get your audience's attention by using a louder voice or making a quick move.
- **Use a quote.** Select a quote from an author, songwriter, poet, or other individual that relates to your subject.

CONCLUSION TIPS

The conclusion is your opportunity to review what you presented with the audience. Here are some tips for effective conclusions:

- Go back over the main points of your speech. Example: "Today I have told you how to _____, _____ and _____."
- No new material should be introduced at this time.
- Be brief and give the audience the feeling you are wrapping it up.
- Think about tying your conclusion to any stories, quotes, or examples you used in your introduction.
- You can challenge your audience to do something in your conclusion. Example: "I have told you about how I have picked up trash on the highway, collected recycled materials, and worked at our local homeless shelter. I challenge everyone in the audience to get involved in community service to make our community a better place to live."

GENERAL DELIVERY TIPS

Delivery is the way you use your voice and your body to present your speech. It includes things like your facial expression, appearance, voice, eye contact, gestures, and body movement. Here are some tips to help with your general delivery:

- Volume is how loud or soft your voice is. Be sure to speak at a loud enough volume so that everyone in the room can hear you.

- Pitch is your voice on a musical level, or simply the highness or lowness of your voice. Vary your pitch throughout the speech to emphasize points and add interest.
- Rate of speech, or pace, is how fast or how slow you talk. Talking at a moderate or slow pace will help the audience to better understand your presentation. You can slow down and speed up your speech to emphasize various points and phrases. Remember that nerves usually cause speakers to speed up their rate of speech on contest day. Try to combat the urge to speed through your presentation!
- Avoid using filler words such as “like” “well” “er” “ah” “um” and “you know”.
- When pronouncing words, be sure you are correct and clear.
- Gestures are movements of your body, especially your hands and head, which help express meaning. Gestures should be used to add emphasis to important parts of your speech, and should appear natural and not be distracting.
- Eye contact is an important part of connecting with your audience. Try to make eye contact with the judge, as well as people in all parts of the room.
- Use of a podium is discouraged. Instead, think about using the space you have to help advance your speech. You can use movement to show the progression of your speech. For example, you can start in the middle for your introduction, then move a few steps to the right for your first point, to the middle for your next point, and so on. Remember not to just pace the room aimlessly. Movement should have purpose and should not take away from your speech.

GENERAL APPEARANCE TIPS

Your appearance plays an important role in how you seem to the audience. Keep these tips in mind:

- Wear clothing that is clean, neat, and appropriate for your speech and age.
- Make sure your clothing and accessories are not distracting. Clothes should generally not have writing on them, and should fit you in such a way that they are not getting in the way of your hands while you present.
- Style your hair so that it will stay out of your face during your presentation.

OVERALL TIPS

- It’s important to show that both you and your speech have a direction. To do this, define your purpose and keep it in mind throughout your speech.
- If your event permits visual aids, make sure they are simple, clear, and sized appropriately so that everyone in the room can read them.
- You can use notes for your event, but memorization is encouraged. If you do choose to use notes, use them minimally and unobtrusively.
- The audience must believe in you and you must believe in yourself. Confidence shows and sells.
- Remember that mistakes happen. It’s okay to make a mistake. Try not to get flustered, take a deep breath, collect yourself and go right on with your presentation.