



PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS

Before you start working on your talk or presentation, it's vital that you really understand what you want to say, who you want to tell and why they might want to hear it. To do this, ask yourself: Who? What? How? When? Where? Why?

Who are you speaking to?

What are their interests, presuppositions and values? What do they share in common with others; how are they unique?

What do you wish to communicate?

One way of answering this question is to ask yourself about the 'success criteria'. How do you know if and when you have successfully communicated what you have in mind?

How can you best convey your message?

Language is important here. Choose your words with your audience in mind. Plan a beginning, middle and end.

When?

Timing is important here. Develop a sense of timing, so that your contributions are seen and heard as relevant to the issue or matter at hand. There is a time to speak and a time to be silent.

Where?

What is the physical context of the communication in mind?

Why?

In order to convert hearers into listeners, you need to know why they should listen to you – and tell them if necessary. What disposes them to listen? That implies that you know yourself why you are seeking to communicate – the value or worth or interest of what you are going to say.

PREPARING YOUR TALK IN ENGLISH

How can I manage to say what I want to say?

Do I know ALL the things I want to do?

Pronunciation

Do I know how to pronounce words? Are the others going to understand me?
How might I find out how to pronounce words?

Vocabulary

Do I know enough words and phrases? Are there any special words and phrases for this subject or situation? If I'm lost for words, am I able to use other words to say what I mean?

Grammar

Being correct isn't easy when we're talking, but be careful not to get obsessed with mistakes. It's important to notice if I have enough grammar to make myself understood, e.g. to speak about the past or future without mixing up tenses, or to use structures according to my level. If I don't, how can I improve?

Effective communication

In order to "communicate effectively" there are words and expressions that can help me get started and keep the talk going (e.g. right, well, sort of, you know, I mean...) Can I use them spontaneously?
Can I manage not to mix languages? What can I do if I don't know exactly how to say something?

AFTER YOUR TALK

Did this give you the chance to show how good you are?

Did you like doing this?

What might have made it better?

What has to be improved?

Is there any language you need to learn?