

TIPS FOR ORATORY

- **Be clear.** Oral communication is different from written communication. Listeners have one chance to hear your talk and can't "re-read" it.

- **Presentation style.** Dress appropriately for the occasion. Be yourself. Establish a rapport with your audience (smile, make eye contact). Be conscious of your posture, voice, gestures, and overall body language. Move around at least a little, but not too much. Avoid swaying from side to side or rocking back and forth; and try not to pace.

- **Pre-presentation evaluation.** Use a tape recorder and listen to yourself, focusing on delivery, pitch, and speed. Ask friends or family to be an audience for practicing the speech and take into consideration their constructive comments.

- **Practice, practice, practice.** Repeating your speech aloud will help with pacing, so you don't talk too slow or too fast. Remember to time your presentation to fit within the limit established when speaking in a natural voice and cadence.

- **Think about your audience.** Most audiences should be addressed in layers: some are experts on your subject, some are experts in the general area, and others know little or nothing.

- **Avoid carbonated beverages—drink water before your speech.** You don't want to accidentally burp and carbonated drinks cause dry mouth. Remember to eat something prior to your speech to avoid growling stomach noises.

- **Smile and pause.** Take a moment to make eye contact with the audience before beginning to speak, which will set a tone of calm and of being in command at the outset.

- **Thought-provoking closing.** Prepare an ending line that is memorable and summarizes a major point your speech is making.

- **Keep the tried and true.** Avoid experimenting with a new style: be it mannerisms, haircut or clothing. You will be most comfortable with what is familiar when presenting your ideas to an audience.

- **Kill the verbal pauses.** Get rid of the sounds and words that act as verbal crutches when you are not quite sure what to say next: *Ah, Er, Um, So, Well, Actually, Basically, Etcetera, You know.* Practice your speech until you are comfortable and confident.

- **Don't apologize—just continue speaking.** Take a breath, pick up your train of thought, and move forward with the rest of your speech. An apology draws attention to an error or omission when it might not even have been noticed.

- **Speak from the heart.** What you say and how you say it are important. Speaking your own convictions improves the probability that your listeners will accept what you are saying.

- **Rooting for you.** Audiences want you to succeed. Focus on delivering a speech that is interesting, thought provoking, informative, and engaging. Make it motivational.