

# Top Tips for Public Speaking

Being able to express your opinion in a clear and calm way will help you get ahead in life. Whether in meetings, doing presentations at an assembly or getting involved in a debate, the following tips will help:

## 1. Prepare and practice

- Know who your audience is with before you write your speech
- Get the facts so you know what you're talking about, and practice your lines (especially when there is more than one of you)
- Take notes with you to remind you of what you want to say. Try to keep them to bullet points rather than whole sentences as this will stop you looking like you are reading every word
- Speak slowly and clearly, record yourself and play it back or practice in front of someone else

## 2. Make a statement - without saying a word

- Most of us make a judgement as soon as we meet someone, usually without realising it; so introductions are important. The way you present yourself will make a difference, be aware of how you are dressed and your overall appearance.
- Think about all the non-verbal communication you are doing, it is saying much more than the words coming out of your mouth! Don't forget:
  - Body language
  - Active listening
  - Good eye contact
  - Encouraging gestures
  - No fidgeting
  - Appropriate facial expressions
  - Big smile

## 3. Predict possible problems

- Think of all the consequences your message could have:
  - Is there anything that people could be offended by?
  - Have you properly thought through your argument to make sure what you're saying is possible?
  - Is there a history in this area? For example, have there been previous problems arising from similar projects

## 4. Be Professional

- Being professional will encourage others to treat you like an adult
- Focus on problems and issues and how to solve them rather than blaming people

#### 5. Does Everyone Understand?

- Make sure that you use words that are appropriate to the people you're talking to. Avoid swearing, street talk and acronyms e.g. phat, innit and LOL
- Do not be afraid of asking for things to be explained – it shows you are listening! It is likely that if you don't understand, others don't either.

#### 6. Keep it Simple!

- What are you trying to say? Use simple language so the meaning of your message is clear.
- Research shows that people remember three new bits of information, usually the first and last things you've said and something that stood out in the middle. Work out what the three key messages you want to get across are and repeat them at the end.
- If you are nervous you may say too much! Prepare what you are going to say and stick to the script.

#### 7. Where are you?

- There are many environmental factors that affect how you communicate.
  - Venue
  - Temperature
  - Noise
  - Light
  - Time
  - Refreshments
  - Other people present

#### 8. Be Aware of the Ripples

- Think about what will happen to the communication – will it be passed on? If so how and to whom?
- If your communication leads to more work, make sure everyone is kept informed of what's happening with regular updates.

#### 9. Rights and Responsibilities

- If you have been asked to represent others, take part in a meeting or talk in public, you should behave in a responsible way. If you abuse the trust that's been given to you, you may not be asked to do it again.

#### 10. Remember why you are doing this...

- As a student you have an important contribution to make in improving your school and community, share your ideas and take time to listen to others