

Overcoming Hesitation, Stage Fear, and Building Speaking Fluency

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PART 1: UNDERSTANDING HESITATION AND STAGE FEAR

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What is Stage Fear?

Stage fear is the natural anxiety experienced when speaking in front of an audience. It stems from worries about judgment or forgetting your lines. Remember, it's completely normal, even for seasoned professionals.



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THE SCIENCE OF STAGE FEAR



PART 2: OVERCOMING STAGE FEAR - PRACTICAL TECHNIQUES

Let's explore powerful techniques to transform your public speaking experience.

1. Acknowledge and Accept Your Fear

Accepting nervousness reduces its power. Stop fighting it, and your mind can focus on the task. A simple exercise: Before speaking, tell yourself, "I feel nervous right now, and that's okay. It shows I care."



2. Thorough Preparation

Preparation is your strongest defense. It builds confidence and secures your knowledge. Research your topic, organize your points, and practice aloud multiple times. Focus on key points, not memorizing full paragraphs.



3. Visualization (Mental Rehearsal)

Your brain can't always distinguish between real and imagined practice. Visualize success: picture yourself walking confidently, delivering smoothly, and receiving applause. Do this daily for 3-5 minutes.



4. Positive Self-Talk

Replace negative thoughts with empowering ones. Instead of "I'll forget," think "I know my topic." Instead of "They'll judge me," think "The audience wants me to succeed." Practice daily until it becomes automatic.



PART 3: FLUENCY DRILLS - BUILDING SMOOTH SPEAKING

Fluency means speaking smoothly, without unnecessary pauses or repetitions. These drills synchronize your mind and mouth.



Drill 1: Tongue Twisters

Improve articulation and confidence. Start slowly, focusing on clarity, then gradually increase speed. Practice daily for 5 minutes.

- "She sells seashells by the seashore."
- "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers."



Drill 2: Breath Control

Support smooth speech with diaphragmatic breathing. Place a hand on your belly and breathe deeply. Practice sustained exhalation ("Shhhhhhhhh") for 20-30 seconds to train steady air release.



Drill 3: Vocal Warm-Ups

Strengthen your voice for clarity. Hum gently, vary your pitch ("Hello" in different tones), and control your volume (whisper, normal, loud). This makes your voice interesting and expressive.



Drill 4: Word & Sentence Repetition

Build muscle memory for smooth speech. Practice difficult words slowly, then at normal speed, then in a sentence. Gradually lengthen sentences ("I speak clearly" to "I speak clearly and confidently").



Drill 5: Shadowing Technique

Copy native speakers' rhythm, speed, and intonation. Listen to a short recording, then speak along with it, mimicking every nuance. Record yourself and compare to the original to train natural speech patterns.



Drill 6: Reading Aloud

Train your eyes, mind, and mouth to work together. Read an interesting passage aloud for 10-15 minutes daily, focusing on clarity at a comfortable pace. Read the same passage 3 times for improved flow.



Drill 7: Storytelling & Narration

Organize thoughts spontaneously. Tell personal stories about your best day or an embarrassing moment. Describe a random picture for 2-3 minutes, focusing on observations and feelings.

PART 4: EXTEMPORE SPEAKING - THINKING ON YOUR FEET

Extempore speaking teaches you to articulate thoughts quickly and confidently without preparation, building genuine fluency.

The 30-Second Strategy



Pause (5 sec)

Breathe deeply, gather your thoughts, and plan 3 main points.



Introduction (10-15 sec)

Clearly state your topic, e.g., "Today I'll discuss why reading is important."



Body (2-3 min)

Elaborate on your 3 points using the A.I.C. Formula (Assert, Illustrate, Conclude) for each.



Conclusion (10-15 sec)

Summarize your points and deliver a powerful closing statement.

Tips for Better Extempore

- **Stay Calm:** Speak slowly; pauses are better than rushing.
- **Connecting Phrases:** Use "To begin with," "Furthermore," "In conclusion" for smooth transitions.
- **Focus on Message:** Prioritize clear ideas over perfection.
- **Personal Examples:** Make your speech relatable and interesting.
- **If Stuck:** Pause, repeat, or rephrase. Never apologize.
- **Avoid Fillers:** Replace "um" or "like" with a brief silence.



PART 5: EXTEMPORE PRACTICE EXERCISES



Random Word Extempore

Pick any 1-2 words (e.g., Honesty, Time, Nature) and speak for 2-3 minutes, using 3 points with the A.I.C. formula. Record yourself for review.



"What If" Scenarios

Answer questions like "What if you could travel to any time period?" for 2-3 minutes. This builds imaginative and quick thinking.



Object Description

Choose an object, describe its physical attributes, purpose, and a personal memory connected to it for 1-2 minutes.



Current Events

Discuss a recent news event or social issue (e.g., AI, mental health) for 2-3 minutes, making 3 clear points.



Story Building

Start with a given sentence and continue a story for 2-3 minutes, ensuring a clear beginning, middle, and end.



Debate Position

Argue for or against a topic (e.g., "Technology makes life better") for 2-3 minutes, practicing persuasive speaking.



Question-Answer

Practice thoughtful, concise responses (30-60 seconds) to random questions like "What makes a good leader?"

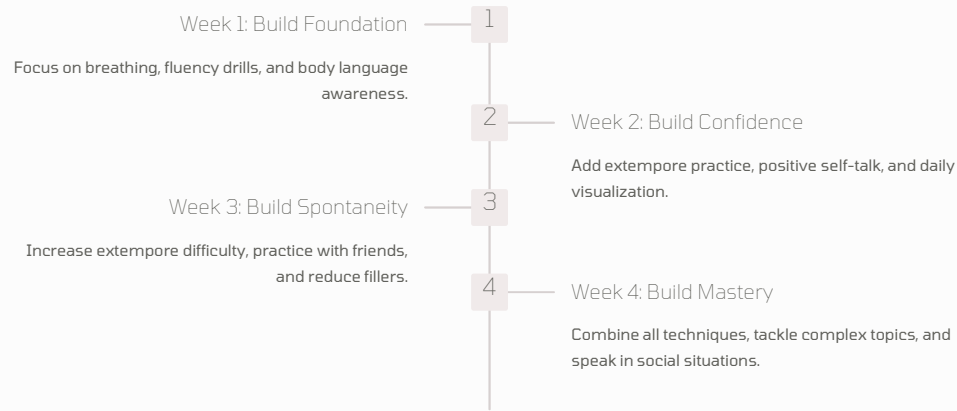
PART 6: PRACTICE ROUTINE AND TIMELINE

Daily Practice Schedule (20-30 minutes)

- **Mon & Thurs (Fluency):** Tongue twisters, reading aloud, storytelling.
- **Tue & Fri (Extempore):** Random topic, debate position, Q&A.
- **Wed & Sat (Integration):** Warm-ups, full extempore, record & review.
- **Sun (Review):** Listen to recordings, note improvements, plan next week.



4-Week Improvement Timeline



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Stage Fear is Normal

Even seasoned speakers experience it; acceptance is the first step.

3. Breathing Controls Anxiety

Deep breathing is your quickest calming tool.

5. Fluency Through Drills

Regular practice builds muscle memory for smooth speech.

7. Focus on Your Message

Prioritize sharing ideas over self-consciousness.

9. Confident Body Language

Stand tall and make purposeful eye contact.

2. Preparation is Powerful

Thorough preparation builds unwavering confidence.

4. Positive Self-Talk

Train your mind to support your success.

6. Gradual Exposure

Start small to expand your comfort zone.

8. Extempore Builds Fluency

It teaches genuine, unscripted speaking skills.

10. Consistency Matters

Daily practice leads to significant, lasting change.