

How to speak with confidence

(Ten tips for non-native English speakers)

- 1. In the beginning, fake it.** If public speaking/presenting makes you nervous, there is no quick and easy way to stop this feeling. It takes time and experience to build your confidence, just like any skill. But with practice, patience, and some guidance, you can do it! In America we say “Fake it until you make it,” which means that if you act confident at first, you will also feel more confident inside. These are some tips to help you fake it until you make it.
- 2. Have good enthusiasm.** It's very important that you keep your presentation or speech exciting and engaging for your audience. Be enthusiastic, which means put a lot of positive energy into your speaking. If you are excited and passionate about your topic, your audience will feel that way too. Using good intonation will help you do this.
- 3. Don't memorize or read.** Don't try to memorize your presentation or read it from slides or cards. Many people try this, but it's actually better to just learn your topic so well and practice so much that you can talk about it naturally. This will make you feel more confident too because you don't have to worry about forgetting something. It's ok to use cards or slides with simple bullet points to guide you, but reading or reciting is not good.
- 4. Take a strong posture and use confident body language.** Even if you feel nervous, taking an open, powerful posture will make you look and feel more confident! Take deep breaths and try to be calm. Avoid fidgeting, shifting your weight from one foot to the other, nervous laughter, etc. Imagine a confident person and try to look like that.
- 5. Smile and use gestures.** Smiling is always a great way to connect with your audience and it will also help you to feel more confident. Using gestures to emphasize your points will also make your presentation more engaging.
- 6. Have good eye contact with the audience.** You want to make your audience feel like you're talking directly to each of them. Try to look around at different sections of the group when you're speaking so everyone feels included.
- 7. Use good intonation and speak clearly.** Speaking clearly is more important than speaking perfectly. Having good intonation will make it easier for native speakers to understand you. Practice putting the stress on important words like nouns and verbs. Native speakers listen for these keywords and will be able to follow you more easily.
- 8. Pay attention to your speed and volume.** Many people speak too quickly when they feel nervous. Don't try to speak more quickly than is comfortable for you. It's better to take your time, speak clearly, and pause when you need to. Also, don't speak too quietly because this will make you sound nervous too.
- 9. Avoid filler words, uptalk, and vocal fry.** Try not to use a lot of filler words such as *um* or *like*. It's better to take a short pause if you need a moment to think. Also avoid using uptalk or vocal fry when you speak. Although many people speak this way, it makes the speaker sound nervous and inexperienced.
- 10. Practice makes perfect!** Practice giving your presentation and record yourself. Then, watch the recording and use these tips to see how you can improve. If you want more feedback, work with an English coach!

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