



Second Strike

**Resource Kits for Student
Representative Councils**



Public Speaking



“Most of the time, it’s not what you
say, it’s how you say it.”

Legal Notice:

This kit is the intellectual property of Second Strike, 2004. This kit, its components and contents are solely for the use of the individual or organisation responsible for purchasing it. Its use is expressly intended for that individual and/or organisation only.

Photocopying, altering and distributing the material, ideas or samples contained within this kit for use within the intended organisation is not only permissible but fully encouraged.

This kit may not, in part or whole, be distributed outside the intended organisation. The contents of this kit, in part or whole, may not be sold or traded even if altered.

Acknowledgements:

First and foremost, thanks go to the students of Student Representative Councils, Student Unions, Student Parliaments, Junior Student Councils, Student Forums and all the other names student representative groups go by. If it were not for your brilliant creativity and your willingness to share your ideas and stories, this kit would be considerably thinner.

Secondly, thanks are due to all students AND Teacher Advisers involved with SRCs around Australia. Yours is possibly the hardest job in the school and we deeply appreciate that commitment.

Thirdly our thanks go to schools who are willing to try new things. These are schools that make being on SRC a fun thing because they do not construct meaningless barriers. These are the test grounds for SRC ideas, which more timid schools then take on as their own.

Last but by no means least, our thanks go to Prudence Meggitt, who has spent hours of time editing these kits, and has taught us how to use a comma properly.

Contents:

3 ----- Introduction
4 ----- How to Use This Kit
5 ----- Before Starting
6 ----- Places to Hide to Avoid Giving a Speech
7 ----- Diving Right In
10 ----- But How You Say It
17 ----- Preparation
20 ----- Appendix
29 ----- Further Resources

But How You Say It:

It's not so much what you say but how you say it! 80% of your speech will be communicated through your tone of voice, volume and intonation, and most importantly, your body language; your eye contact, your stance, your hand gestures and appearance.

Elements of body language in your speech:

It is important to understand these elements of public speaking, not so that you will think through every item as you go and tick them off one by one; but when people give you advice in their vague descriptions, you will know what they mean and how to interpret that advice.

- **Body Language**
- **Personal Appearance**
- **Using a Microphone**
- **Common Bad Habits**

Much of the following are entirely natural things to do on stage anyway. A lot of people automatically have a good stance on stage, a lot speak clearly without having to think about it, most move automatically to the centre of the stage. Perfect! This is exactly where you want to get to; or if you are training people this is the end goal that you want to arrive at. We shouldn't have to think about every single element in our body language to ensure we are getting it right. Unfortunately there is a lot we automatically get wrong. Very wrong sometimes. Until the speaker can analyse their actions on stage and train themselves to *naturally* get it all right, those elements that are proving difficult must be consciously focused on.

Body Language

Volume

If you can't be heard then you aren't giving a speech. You need to project your voice across the entire room so that you can be heard. Projection is different from shouting. Volume comes from your diaphragm, down in your gut, that is where you push your volume from, not from your upper chest which only produces shouting that can't travel far. You will feel the difference in those parts of your body.

Tone

Your tone of voice is your pitch when you say different words and sentences and the emphasis you put on words or sentences. In other words, how high or low and loud or soft you speak. By putting additional stress on words you can make the point so much more powerful. Don't plan these too heavily or you risk killing the natural flow of your speech. In general, the key word or words in any sentence are those on which to stress or alter the pitch.

Speed

Your normal speed in conversation is too fast for a speech. The audience must have time to digest your words and thoughts. The larger the audience the slower you will need to go. Friends in the audience can give you a signal to slow down, pay attention to them.

Clarity

Your words must be able to exit your mouth clearly and travel across the audience to the back of the room without anything getting in their way. The first things that can and will get in the way of your words is your teeth and your lips. Open your MOUTH! Wide open! Are you doing that? Good. Open it wider. Honestly, however wide you think your mouth is when you speak and however ridiculous you think you look already, your mouth could be a little wider.

Next point! You need to pronounce each word very clearly. If you find your words are not coming out clearly, most likely it is because the end of the word is being dropped or lost in the flow. This is most common, and has an easy solution. Add an 'e' to the end of your words, especially those that end with a sharp consonant. Words like: 'down' or 'track' sound better if you imagine an 'e' at the end of it. It sounds out the final letter strongly. '**Downe**' and '**tracke**'.

Stance

Get your stance right at the beginning. You have two choices:

1. Feet slightly apart, about shoulder width, pointing forward with your weight evenly balanced.



2. Feet together, pointing forward with your weight evenly balanced.



Not a lot of choice, but unless you deliberately need to make some special point to be dramatically demonstrated by a different stance, then these are your options.

Let's have some good posture too; stand up straight, head held high and shoulders back.

Lastly, don't lean on anything behind you or to the side of you. Let go. You should be floating freely on stage, unattached to the scenery. You must *be* the visual object for the audience and clinging to anything around you will bring that wall, table or other object into prominence as the visual object. This detracts from you and your purpose. Ideally if you can avoid gripping the lectern in front of you too that would be great.

Eye contact

Your audience needs to know that you are talking to them. Apparently the fact that your standing in front of them saying 'I'm about to give a speech' isn't enough, then need to be looked at. It is the same as in conversation. The other point to consider is that the audience does not feel you show any respect for them, as though you are in some way superior or bored by them, and they will respond in kind.

ALL your audience needs to feel that you are aware of them and directing your speech to them. You direct your speech with your eyes. To ensure that every person feels involved you don't actually need to make eye contact with each person in the room. Use a trick called '*scanning*'. Move your eyes from side to side and include the people on the far left and right ends. Or you can pick six or seven people at different locations; one right up the back to the left, one in the fourth row to the right a little, one in dead centre, one on each of the wings, one in the front row. Look at each of these people in turn and repeat the cycle, occasionally varying it a bit so you don't look like a robot.

Preparation:

Preparation makes the difference. Preparation consists of four elements:

1. Research
2. Writing
3. Rehearsal
4. Review

The more preparation you do, the better. This is true 90% of the time. However it is also possible to over prepare. You can end up with so much that you could say that you try and fit it all in – as a result your speech may become filled with tangents that confuse your audience or you may end up speaking too fast in order to get it all said in time. Worst case scenario you will stress yourself into a panic and that tension will be communicated to your audience.

You can find these four elements described in step by step detail with suggestions and guide sections in appendix , page .

Research

Research contains many parts. Walking home and thinking to yourself “How did I get landed with this speech? What am I going to say???” is the beginning of your research.

The first step of your speech is getting a real feel for the topic. Simply put, you need to think about what the topic means, how you feel about it, how other people think of it and any other thoughts that jump immediately to mind.

Danger: If you get lazy this is where you will stop. This makes for a sloppy and over confident speech. Your preparation must go further.

Your next research step is to discover what the purpose of the speech is in specific terms. Define the topic you are presenting. Start by writing it out in full. A single word is not a topic. One or two words is not a topic. Get a whole sentence as your topic. A statement! The more ‘hooks’ you have in your topic the easier it will be to take your speech somewhere.

A ‘hook’ is something in your topic that can lead you to talking about something interesting with ease. It needs to be hinted at in your topic or the audience won’t easily see how you have gotten to the point.

Audiences don’t like surprises so much. It also helps keeps you on track in delivering your message effectively.

The more you practice this step the faster it gets. It eventually becomes automatic.

Before you can begin reading, hunting references and quotes, you need a clear idea of what you are looking for. You need to be aware of what you already know and what you don’t know. Then you can direct your investigations to fill in those gaps. Consider what people want to hear and what questions they might ask.

Who is your speech for? Think about how to best present your speech, it will be a very different speech if you deliver it to students than if you

deliver it to teachers. How many people are in the audience? What kind of room is it? You may deliver a more formal speech the more people are in the room.

The library and the internet are not the only places to be doing your research. Interview people. Ask the school about their records, policies and other documents. Survey some people who are likely to be in your audience or are similar to the people in the audience (students from other schools for example). Get a feel for how they feel about the topic so that you can anticipate your audiences' reactions.

Also, double check your information at each step of the way. Find a second source that confirms your information. It can be pretty embarrassing being corrected by an audience member who has a more up to date book than you do.

Writing

Your speech needs three sections. A beginning, a middle and an end.

The beginning:

Always plan to start your speech by introducing yourself and introducing your topic. This should include an overview of what you will cover within the topic. Your opening line is prepared for you should you choose to use it.

“Hi everyone, my name is [insert name here] and I’m here to talk to you about [insert topic here].”

It works every time regardless of your topic.

Your opening should be brief. You should be able to fit it on one palm card in your speech.

The middle:

A good speech should seek only to make three good points and leave it at that. Don't seek to give too much information or you will overwhelm your audience. Pick your three most important points and plan to cover these. (It may run to more than three points but try and keep it short)

Each point should be covered in three ways.

1. Explain what your point is. Be clear and find other ways of explaining it to reinforce its importance.
2. Give some examples or stories to illustrate your point.
3. Summarise your point really briefly and show how it proves what you are saying.

Have you challenged your audience? Get them thinking. Ask a few questions of your own. You can either wait for your audience to respond (make sure you know what they're going to say) or you can just let the question sit in their minds whilst they think about it.

The third point you make it would be great to show how all three points flow together to support your speech.

This formula still works even if your speech isn't trying to prove a point or argue your case. If you are telling a story or imparting information you should still keep to this structure (though you can deviate in parts from it as you see fit). This structure helps your audience to understand and remember your speech in the easiest and most enjoyable manner. The human brain finds information and opinions delivered in this manner easy to process as it has a structured rhythm and pattern.

Public Speaking Tip Sheet

10 Thoughts to make it a little bit easier

Public speaking is often listed as the top fear for most people, even above spiders and death. A little bit of thinking before hand and a few tricks during a speech can make it a lot more relaxed.

Public Speaking is one of those things that someone will eventually make you do. As a leader you will be first in line for these jobs very often. If it isn't something you enjoy, the best way to get through it is to be prepared, which will make you more confident.

Preparation:

1. Tell 'em what you're going to say, say it, then tell 'em what you said. Get peoples' attention by reminding them of your topic, even if they've just been told. After you've said everything you wanted to say, end with a summary of your topic. This will really get it into the minds of your audience.
2. An audience can't/won't listen to much information. The shorter you can make it the better. Go straight to the point wherever you can.
3. Practice looking up when speaking. If you are familiar with your speech you won't need to look down so much. Audiences really love eye contact.
4. Try to visit the stage or venue before your speech. Get the feel of it, find out how loud you need to be to be heard at the back of the room. (When the room is full you need to be a bit louder). If you're using a microphone, try and get some practice with it before hand.
5. Prepare a strong finish. "That's what our group thought about the Environment. Thank you!" Try never to look like you're only stopping because you can't think of anything else to say. Eg. "Um, so yeah, that's all" doesn't inspire confidence in your audience.

During your speech:

1. Walk directly to the centre of the stage and plant your feet squarely on the ground. This makes you look confident, which audiences love, and prevents you from wriggling your legs too much.
2. If you can't make eye contact with your audience easily, try looking at their hair, or the back of the room. Move the direction of your gaze around a bit so that all the audience thinks you're looking at them.
3. NEVER picture the audience in their underwear! If you try, it's likely one of your teachers will be in the audience, and there's no recovery from that!!!
4. If you stumble in your speech, lose your place, or make a mistake, don't worry about it. If they audience even noticed, they don't mind. You are allowed to pause for a few seconds and gather your thoughts. You don't even have to apologise.
5. Timing is important! YOU decide when you're finished. Nobody else can give you permission to finish. BUT, if you go too long someone will cut you off. Get a friend in the audience to give you a signal when you've reached a certain time, like 5 or 10 minutes. Always better to be a little too short than too long.