

Public Speaking & Communication

Superhero Guide for Better Communication

There are many ways to communicate, other than using your voice. The way you communicate has the power to educate, encourage, and inspire others. The power of influence and persuasion is often derived from the way you communicate, and how let others see the world.

Whether you're giving an oral or signed presentation to your class, speaking at a family event, or talking about your cause or project to a group of people counts as public speaking and communication. Sharing your stories, your message, your projects, or your experiences with others will help you practice the art of communication and public speaking.

Did you know that addressing or presenting to more than two people is regarded as public speaking and communication?

Your mind is your body's powerhouse; it thinks what you tell it to think, and it believes what you want it to believe!

With this kind of power, you can train it to be of service to you. So, whether you're presenting to three people or three hundred people, your mind can be trained to focus on the mission and not on the numbers.

Great leaders should be great communicators. When you learn to communicate well, you can:

- Engage better with others
- Be a good listener and observer
- Let go of your fears and anxieties for public speaking
- Speak or communicate with clarity and confidence
- Educate others that there are several ways to communicate
- Be aware and mindful of how others communicate
- Inspire others to join and interact with you
- Inspire others to support your project or cause
- Convince adults and your peers to support your ideas
- Share your successes to motivate other youth
- Stand up for what's right with confidence
- Build bridges between different groups of people

As humans, we all go through different challenges, but this does not mean that we have limited potential.

Ever feel like this?

'I am too nervous to talk in front of large groups.'

"What if I have stage fright and go blank?"

"What if my peers judge me?"

"Because I'm deaf, I don't think people will take me seriously."

"I'm not confident enough."

"My English isn't perfect."

'I am too shy'

So what!

Did you know that even the most experienced and professional speakers and communicators get nervous when addressing groups of people!

Do this instead:

- Adopt a winning and positive attitude
- Be prepared and know your subject matter
- Know your audience
- Prepare key points (not word-for-word scripts), have timed prompts, and practice these before your event
- Take a few deep breaths - this will calm your nervous system
- Be yourself, being authentic portrays a sincere and genuine energy
- Have a warm greeting and thank the audience for their time and presence
- Being polite and courteous is important
- Smile – it warms the atmosphere and energy around you
- Introduce yourself and the purpose of your talk/presentation.
- Check your posture – stand tall, shoulders back, feet shoulder width apart, or sit in a comfortable position
- Have an interpreter for support if necessary
- Remember to pause; silence is powerful. It's an opportunity to centre yourself, gather your thoughts, and take a breather.
- Consider having an opening or ice-breaker that will help you set the tone and have an engaged audience (optional)
- Visualize yourself delivering a successful talk or presentation

- Focus on your message, not on yourself
- Perfect doesn't exist, being authentic does, and mistakes mean you are human
- Speak from your heart in whatever language feels most comfortable
- If you are using sign language or an interpreter, remember that your body language and facial expressions are also communicators
- Leave your audience with a strong closing, quote, or a powerful statement
- Thank them and greet them on your closing.

Examples of Opening Options:

Question: "How many of you have ever felt that because you are young, people won't think of you as a leader?"

Story: "Three months ago, I thought I was just a shy, regular student. Today, I want to tell you how that changed since I've joined the Jumpstart Club..."

Powerful statement: "We are the future leaders, and nothing is more powerful than leading together."

Closing Options:

Challenge your audience with a specific action

Leave them with a powerful quote or vision

Communicating through Storytelling

Did you know

- People remember stories better than facts alone
- Stories create emotional connection
- You can talk about your own personal journey or transformation

Some useful tips:

- Remember, stories can be heard, seen, and felt.
- We live in a world where everyone is different, and how we share our stories should demonstrate compassion, respect, and inclusivity.
- We all have our own way of communicating, whether we are differently abled, visually or hearing impaired.

- How we communicate has no boundaries, and elements such as oral speech, sign language, music, art, and dance can convey powerful messages and stories.

What can I do to communicate better?

- Let your voice or method of communication be your storyteller
- Be present – it will show up as confidence
- Be a good listener and observer
- Don't interrupt others, or talk over them when they are speaking or communicating
- Don't cause disruptions, distractions, or shout out - this is disrespectful
- Respect different people, their languages, and their cultures
- Connect through body language
- Make eye contact with your audience if able to do so
- Use gestures that feel natural to you

How can I get better at this?

- Practice it and enjoy it!
- Practice in front of the mirror and observe your posture, gestures, and facial expressions
- Record yourself and play it back to hear what you sound like
- Do a test run in front of family and friends that you trust and ask for their feedback
- Time yourself and make sure you stick to your time limit (Have someone signal you or prompt you when your time is nearly up)

Presenting Your Project

The Pitch (5 minutes)

Structure:

1. Talk about the problem: What issue are you addressing? Have a strong opening.
2. Provide the solution: Your specific project plan on how you will solve the problem. Have a timeframe.
3. Measure the potential impact: What difference will this make, and what kind of impact will it have?
4. The support that you will need: What kind of support do you want or need?

Example of an opening:

"Imagine coming to school where 200 students have nothing to eat for the entire day, almost every day. You don't have to imagine - it's happening right here in our school, in our community. But we have a plan to change that..."

The Call to Action (3-5 minutes)

Mobilising others and inspiring them to get involved and support the project

Structure:

1. Urgency – explain what this matters right now
2. Action – explain ways of helping and getting involved
3. Results – tell them what their involvement will mean and the impact it will make
4. Next steps – explain exactly what to do and when

Example: "Right now, while I'm speaking, hundreds of learners at schools in our community are coming to school hungry with nothing to eat. In the next 5 minutes, I'm going to explain to you how we as a club can change that - and it starts with an intention and a decision you can make today."

Action: "Show of hands - who here wants to help feed hungry children? Keep your hands up if you know exactly how to do it."

Handling Q&A Like a Pro

Be prepared for the unexpected!

Here's how:

- Brainstorm 10 questions you hope they DON'T ask
- Prepare honest, short and concise answers for each
- Practice saying "I don't know, but I'll find out."
- Have a trusted friend ask tough questions to help you prepare this practice

During the Q&A:

- Listen carefully to understand the question before responding
- Repeat the question so everyone hears it
- Pause to think - silence is okay if you need to gather your thoughts
- Be honest if you don't know something
- Never judge, make fun, or laugh at someone's question

Some tough Qs and what-ifs!

Q: "You're just students - what makes you think you can solve problems that adults can't solve?"

A: "You're right. We are students, and we are young, but that's actually our strength. We see these problems from the inside; some of us live it. We are not bound by 'how things have always been done,' and we are not saying it didn't work. We just want to bring our ideas, passion, and energy to try new approaches. Plus, we're not trying to solve everything; we're addressing an urgent problem in our school/community. We care and every act of kindness is a service to our community and humanity."

Q: "What if your project doesn't work?"

A: "Great question. We've researched similar projects that have succeeded, we've planned carefully, and we have mentors guiding us. But you're right - there are no guarantees. What I can guarantee is that doing nothing definitely doesn't solve any problems. We'd rather try and learn than not try at all."

Visual Aids:

Props: Physical objects that relate to your topic

Photos: Images, news articles that tell your story

Flip chart/whiteboard/blackboard: Write key points as you speak