



Public Speaking

You're going to give a speech today! It's a high-stress time for most of us. Of course, you want to do a good job and not mess anything up. The following information will help ensure that when you get up to speak you're ready – really ready – to go.

Overview

In Cuong Nhu you will be required to fulfill a public speaking requirement. Having good communication skills can be a valuable asset in leading a successful life, both inside and outside the dojo. Inside the dojo you may be called upon by your instructor to assist in teaching, and you yourself may in turn eventually become a teacher. To begin, plan your speech beforehand, what you want to say and how you want to say it. You may wish to jot down notes to organize your thoughts, but by the time you need to make your presentation you should know your topic well enough that they become unnecessary. Even though it might not come out word for word, planning ahead helps you express your ideas more efficiently. When speaking in front of a group it is important to be both clear and concise. Speaking clearly means projecting your voice and using proper grammar and articulation. Speak slowly and maintain eye contact with your audience. Minimize excessive gesturing and be aware of using distracting mannerisms such as “umm...” and “ok.” Finally, good public speakers often use strategies such as humor or changing the volume and tempo of their voice to make their speaking interesting and entertaining. The many factors that go into a successful presentation can be divided into three equally important categories: speech preparation, delivery, and evaluation.

Step One: Effective Preparation

Writing your Speech

Since you know about the public speaking requirement ahead of time, you are expected to prepare yourself and, in the process, hone your public speaking skills. One way of preparing is to determine what you are going to say, and this is often best accomplished using a more concrete medium such as writing. Writing papers and speeches, whether for a rank requirement or for other purposes, consists of a lot more than simply finding a few inspirational quotes and possibly a funny story or two. The key to writing a good essay or speech lies in using a *theme*. If you always refer back to this theme, the audience will respond positively and remember your words. This does not mean that inspirational quotes are not important, however, they should be integrated into your speech in a way that makes sense.

The first task that you, as a public speaker, need to focus on before you do any actual writing is to determine what message you wish to convey. To help, consider who your audience is going to be. Usually, you are addressing your fellow classmates and familiar teachers. However, family, friends, and guest instructors may also be present. Therefore, what you say must be in line with the dignity of the ceremony itself. Remembering that, think of the ONE thought with which you want to leave your audience. Why only one idea? If you reinforce a single point instead of focusing on entirely different ideas, your audience will have a greater tendency to remember it. A speech does not lend itself to having many themes. Stick with one really good theme, and use each point you make, otherwise known as your *theme reinforcers*, to bring that idea home. For example, if you are speaking about how Cuong Nhu has affected your life, find one central idea that you feel strongly about such as personal responsibility, and return to that idea with each point you make. Write your individual points to reinforce your main idea.

Put what you have to say in a logical sequence. The material you present should have a logical progression starting with an introduction presenting your “thesis statement” to the main body comprised of several strong supporting arguments, each in its own paragraph, to the conclusion where you re-state your thesis, then provide a brief summary and logical conclusion. Keep in mind that your goal is to persuade your audience effectively. Ensure your speech will be captivating to your audience as well as worth their time and attention.

Step Two: Effective Delivery

Tips for Public Speaking

Know your material thoroughly. Practice and rehearse your speech at home or where you can be at ease and comfortable, in front of a mirror, your family, friends or colleagues. Use a tape-recorder and listen to yourself. Videotape your presentation and analyze it. Know what your strong and weak points are. Emphasize your strong points during your presentation.

When you are presenting in front of an audience, you are performing as an actor is on stage. How you are being perceived is very important. Present the desired image to your audience. Look pleasant, enthusiastic, confident, proud, but not arrogant. Be solemn if your topic is serious. Remain calm. Appear relaxed, even if you feel nervous. Speak slowly, enunciate clearly, and show appropriate emotion and feeling relating to your topic. Establish rapport with your audience. Speak to the person farthest away from you to ensure your voice is loud enough to project to the back of the room. Vary the tone of your voice and dramatize if necessary. If a microphone is being used, adjust and adapt your voice accordingly.

In the moments before your speech, check your breathing. How nervous are you? Do you need to do some calming exercises? Some deep breathing will often suffice. Focus on an authentic, positive emotion connected with your speech. Have a plan to help you get into that mind set if you’re not already there.

Keep in mind that your body language is very important. Standing, walking or moving about naturally, accenting your speech with appropriate hand gestures and facial expressions is preferred to sitting down or standing still with your head down and reading from a prepared speech. Consider using audio-visual aids or props for enhancement if appropriate and necessary.

Speak with conviction to persuade your audience. The material you present orally should have the same ingredients that are required for a written paper, i.e. a logical progression from an introduction to the main body to a logical conclusion. Remember, however, that there is a difference between spoken words appropriate for the ear and formally written words intended for reading. You may use some *short* written cues to help you during your speech, but, while it is quite acceptable to glance at your notes infrequently, do not read from notes for any extended length of time.

Maintain sincere eye contact with your audience. Use the Three-Second Method, looking straight into the eyes of a person in the audience for three seconds at a time. Have direct eye contact with a number of people in the audience, and every now and then glance at the whole audience while speaking. Use your eye contact to make everyone in your audience feel involved.

Speak loudly and clearly. Sound confident. Do not mumble. Speak to your audience, respond to their reactions, adjust and adapt. If what you have prepared is obviously not getting across to your audience, change your strategy mid-stream if you are able and prepared to do so. If you make an error, correct it, and continue. No need to make excuses or apologize profusely. Remember that communication is the key to a successful presentation. If you are short of time, know what can be safely left out. If you have extra time, know what could be effectively added. Always be prepared for the unexpected.

Pause. Allow yourself and your audience a little time to reflect and think. Don't race through your presentation and leave your audience, as well as yourself, feeling out of breath.

Add humor whenever appropriate and possible. Keep the audience interested throughout your entire presentation. Remember that an interesting speech makes time fly, but a boring speech is always too long to endure even if the presentation time is the same.

Perhaps most importantly, know when to STOP talking. Use a timer or clock to time your presentation when preparing it at home. Just as you don't use unnecessary words in your written paper, don't bore your audience with repetitious or unnecessary words in your oral presentation. To end your presentation, summarize your main points in the same way as you normally do in the conclusion of a written paper. Terminate your presentation with an interesting remark or an appropriate punch line. Leave your listeners with a positive impression and a sense of completion. Do not belabor your closing remarks. Simply thank your audience and sit down.

Step Three: Effective Evaluation

Grading Public Speaking

Knowing how the public speaking requirement will be graded is important to both the student and the instructor alike. Many education experts believe that rubrics improve students' end products and therefore increase learning. A rubric is a scoring tool that lists the criteria for a piece of work. A good rubric also describes levels of quality for each of the criteria, usually on a point scale. There are many advantages to using rubrics. When students receive the rubric beforehand, they understand how they will be evaluated and can prepare accordingly. Instructors can use the rubric grid as the "scaffolding" necessary to improve the quality of their students' work and increase their knowledge, increasing the quality of their instruction by providing focus, emphasis, and attention to particular details as a model for students.

Below are two separate rubrics designed to help you and your instructor know explicitly what makes a good final product and why. The first rubric is presented in paragraph form, while the second consists of a two-part evaluation sheet. In content both rubrics are very similar, so both are equally valid forms of evaluation.

Rubric One: The A, B, C Speech

Under **SPEECH COMPOSITION**, consider these five areas:

- How well you introduce your speech
- How logically and appropriately you divide your topic into its component ideas
- How fully you develop your topic with a variety of supporting materials
- How carefully you choose the language you use in presenting your ideas
- How effectively you conclude your speech

Under **SPEECH DELIVERY**, consider these five factors:

- How poised and at ease you appear in giving your speech
- How effectively you gesture and move while presenting your ideas
- How aware of and responsive to your audience you are as you give your speech
- How natural and expressive your voice is as you speak
- How effective your overall performance seems to be with this particular audience

Each of these ten factors has degrees of competence associated with it; they are not simply "pass" or "fail." In the section below is described, in general terms, the differences between an **A**, **B**, and **C** speech.

THE C SPEECH

To receive a grade of **C**, a speech must be basically *competent*. The **C** speech is one in which nothing goes majorly wrong. The introduction gets the speech started appropriately by capturing your audience's attention and directing it toward your speech's theme. The introduction also relates the topic to the audience in some clear way, establishes your credibility on the topic, and leads smoothly to the body of the speech. The body of the **C** speech is divided in a way that is appropriate to the topic, is developed with appropriate supporting details, and is cast into language

that accurately and clearly expresses your ideas. The conclusion fulfills the minimum essentials, summarizing either your main theme or major points, and giving the speech a definite sense of conclusion.

The delivery of the **C** speech is one in which you do not look visibly nervous, nor do you have distracting postural, gestural, or movement mannerisms (such as slouching, brushing your hair out of your eyes, and rocking or squirming while you speak). Furthermore, to receive a grade of a **C** you should at least maintain more eye contact with your audience than with your notes, the walls, or the ceiling. Your voice should be relatively flowing, loud enough to be heard without the audience having to strain, and free from vocalized pauses such as "uhs," "you knows," and "like." Finally, the **C** speech keeps the audience at least politely attentive throughout. The topic must be interesting and significant enough to be worthy of their time.

At first, the vast majority of speeches will fall into this category. For most students, simply being able to present their ideas in a coherent and reasonably well-developed manner, while looking basically poised and confident standing up in front of their classmates, is an important and significant accomplishment. A grade of **C** on your speech is an indication that you have achieved a level of competence.

THE B SPEECH

To receive a grade of **B**, a speech must be more than simply competent; it must also be *interesting*. The introduction of the **B** speech is usually more fully developed with more time and effort spent in relating the topic to the audience and preparing them for what is to follow. The body of the **B** speech has a clear pattern of organization that is closely related to the central theme. The **B** speech also has fuller development and employs a wider variety of interesting supporting details (such as anecdotes, examples, visual aids, definitions, statistics, comparisons, contrasts, analogies), as well as more fully adapting those materials to this particular audience. Often, the conclusion of the **B** speech is more fully developed and better integrates with the theme of the speech as well.

Delivery in a **B** speech has you more animated and fluid. Not only do you not look uncomfortable, you are actually beginning to look comfortable and at ease. Your posture remains good, you are beginning to gesture naturally and expressively, and your movement on the platform begins to serve the conveyance of your speech's content instead of merely using up excess adrenalin. Your voice is becoming more expressive and empathic, and your audience shows signs of active interest in your speech.

THE A SPEECH

To receive a grade of **A**, your speech must be more than interesting; it must also be *memorable*. The introduction actively involves us with your topic in some way and makes us want to hear more, starting the speech out with a bang. Your analysis of the subject is unusual, insightful, novel, and unexpected. Your examples are especially apt and well-adapted to your particular audience. Your language choices are vivid (perhaps employing some effective imagery or sustained metaphor that unifies the entire speech). The statements of your main points are memorable (they alliterate, or are grammatically parallel, and so on). Transitions between points are varied and appropriate; the audience knows at all times precisely where you are in your speech and how the parts relate to the whole. The conclusion of the **A** speech not only rounds the speech out by giving it a sense of completeness; it actually gives the speech a sense of **IMPACT** and forcefulness.

Of course, rarely there may be a speech that does not fulfill the basic requirements for a **C**, in which case a **D** (below average, almost a **C** but needs some tweaking) or **F** (failure, severely deficient in several of the evaluated areas). In either case the student should redo the assignment with the assistance of a qualified instructor.

Rubric Two: The 2 Part Evaluation

Some people may find it easier to use a rubric presented in the form of a chart. Similar to Rubric One presented above, Rubric Two looks at two main areas: Speech Composition and Speech Delivery. If you opt to use the 2 part evaluation that follows, simply print the evaluation sheets and assign a numerical grade of 1 to 5 for each category.

Score using whole numbers only. For easier use, the Evaluation Sheets provide descriptions of only some of the range. Therefore, a score of 4 or 2 are in the middle. For #1, for example, a "4" would be "somewhat clear", and a "2" would be "Somewhat evident but not entirely."

Once completed, add up the scores and divide the sum by 10 to get an average (very easy math, simply move the decimal point one place to the left). This average represents the student's final score.

A final score of:	4.5 to 5.0 = A	2.5 to 3.4 = C
	3.5 to 4.4 = B	1.5 to 2.4 = D

Part 1: Speech Composition

1. States the purpose.

Points	Criteria
5	The purpose is clear and captures the listener's attention.
3	The purpose is apparent.
1	The purpose is not evident.

2. Organizes the content.

Points	Criteria
5	The content is organized logically with fluid transitions to capture and hold the listener's attention throughout the entire presentation.
3	The organization of the content is congruent; transitions are evident.
1	The content lacks organization; transitions are abrupt and distracting.

3. Supports ideas.

Points	Criteria
5	Important details add to the interest and depth of the presentation; details work to connect the listener to the speech.
3	The speaker provides the basic details necessary for the listener to understand the premise of the presentation.
1	The majority of ideas are unsupported by additional information or explanation.

4. Incorporates stories and examples.

Points	Criteria
5	Relevant examples or stories work to interest the listener and further develop main ideas.
3	Stories and examples obviously relate to the content of the speech.
1	Stories and examples are missing or unrelated.

5. Summarizes the main idea(s).

Points	Criteria
5	The conclusion unites the important points of the presentation and encourages future discussion.
3	The conclusion summarizes the main ideas.
1	The speech ends without a summary.

Part 2: Speech Delivery

6. Demonstrates awareness of listener's needs.

Points	Criteria
5	The choices of language, examples, and aids work together to heighten the listener's interest and connection to the topic.
3	The speaker's word choices, explanations, and enthusiasm are appropriate for the topic and for each point; appropriate aids are incorporated.
1	The presentation is uninteresting.

7. Speaks clearly with appropriate vocabulary and information.

Points	Criteria
5	The vocabulary is descriptive and accurate, engaging the listener through imagery.
3	The vocabulary provides clarity and avoids confusion.
1	The vocabulary is awkward or inappropriate for the topic, making the speaker difficult to understand.

8. Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools.

Points	Criteria
5	The speaker manipulates tone, speed, and volume, using these tools to emphasize important ideas and hold the listener's attention.
3	The speaker avoids distracting vocal fillers or physical mannerisms and uses adequate speed and volume throughout the presentation.
1	Vocal fillers are present throughout the presentation. Speed and volume are inappropriate for the presentation.

9. Demonstrates complexity of thought and vocabulary.

Points	Criteria
5	Variation of sentence structure and word choice works to keep the listener interested and provides multiple examples and descriptions.
3	Sentence structure and word choice are varied to avoid monotony of tone and repetition of ideas.
1	Sentence structure and word choice are monotonous and uninteresting.

10. Appears comfortable with audience.

Points	Criteria
5	Eye contact, interaction with aids, and physical gestures demonstrate the speaker's energy and interest, guiding the listener through the presentation.
3	Eye contact, interaction with aids, and physical gestures are natural and fluid.
1	Eye contact with the audience is lacking. Gestures are missing or awkward. The speaker depends heavily on the written speech or notes.

Total Score _____ divided by 10 = Final Score _____

4.5 to 5.0 = **A**
 3.5 to 4.4 = **B**
 2.5 to 3.4 = **C**
 1.5 to 2.4 = **D**