

Student Handout 14.1 (1 of 2)

Public Speaking Terminology

Fluency/Continuity: moving with ease; polished. A fluent speaker rarely stumbles through a presentation. Fluency comes from preparation and practice.

Volume: the degree of loudness of sound. A speaker must be heard clearly. Additionally, adjusting one's volume is an excellent way to emphasize and deemphasize words.

Eye Contact: making a visual connection with individuals in audience. Speakers cannot read from papers or cards continually. The audience doesn't feel that the speaker spoke to them. Looking at individuals garners attention and makes the presentation personal.

Pacing: the degree of quickness with which one delivers a speech. We often speak too quickly when we're nervously speaking to a group. Be aware of pacing and take moments to pause and allow the audience to absorb points.

Movement: changing physical position. Sometimes, like when speaking from a podium, movement is limited. Other times, like when speaking from a stage, the audience will expect the speaker to move within the space. Be careful. Too much movement is distracting.

Gesticulation: act of making gestures or moving one's body parts, usually arms, hands, legs, as a means of expression. Gesturing should be planned and practiced. It's hard to gesture when holding papers or cards. Usually a speaker memorizes first.

Facial Expression: communicating ideas and emotions nonverbally by contorting one's face. Sounds strange, but you can communicate that something smells bad by crinkling up your nose. Using gesture and facial expression emphasizes those points that you're making in your speech.

Enunciation: clearly saying the sounds and syllables in words. It is important to speak clearly and not slur or mumble words or parts of words. Being nervous or moving at a quick pace often makes us fail to enunciate the latter parts of words or phrases.

Pronunciation: speaking words as they are meant to be spoken. This is the tomato (tuh-may-toe), tomato (tuh-mah-toe) issue. Pronouncing words incorrectly reflects poorly on the speaker. Using colloquial pronunciation creates a specific affect. Preparation prevents errors in pronunciation.

Student Activity 14.1 (2 of 2)

Audience: the people who are listening and/or viewing a presentation or speaker. Pay attention to the audience. Know the audience and adjust the speech or presentation accordingly.

Tone: the expression in one's voice generated by altering pitch (highness and lowness). Think about an angry voice versus a happy voice. Changing tone keeps the audience engaged and suggests the speaker's attitude toward the topic.

Diction: word choice. Choose vocabulary that is appropriate and understandable for the audience.

Impromptu/Extemporaneous: speaking or presenting with little or no preparation.

Visual Aids: any visible props or components of one's presentation. Posters, charts, graphs, demonstrations, Power Point presentations, media clips, and overhead projections are all effective visual aids.

