

1. **Prepare adequately.** Research your issue; develop your main message, type out your talking points, and practice, practice, practice.
2. **Know the place and process.** Be familiar with the place in which you will speak, and the process for speaking. For instance, find out ahead of time if you need to put in a speaker slip, and if it needs to be in before the meeting starts.
3. **Know the decision-makers and your target audience.** Think carefully about who you are speaking to. What kind of information and approach will they respond positively to?
4. **Be ready with all of your materials.** Come prepared with all of the materials you will be handing out. If you are using materials in your testimony that you are not handing out, bring extra copies in case someone requests them.
5. **Know your presentation.** If you're not familiar with your presentation, or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase. Practice your speech and revise it if necessary. Practice out loud and in a mirror.
6. **Deliver your message with dignity.** Your presentation starts at your approach to the podium. Take time to adjust the microphone. Make eye contact with the people you are addressing. Speak slowly and clearly. Always be respectful, even if they are not. Stay in the audience through the deliberations and decision.
7. **Structure your presentation.** At the beginning of your presentation, greet the audience, introduce yourself, and tell them why you are interested in the issue. Organize your comments around your main points. Start with your statement of the issue (what is the problem), then state your proposed solution, and, finally, tell your audience clearly what action you are proposing that they take. Finally, thank them for listening.
8. **Turn nervousness into positive energy.** Harness your nervous energy and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm.
9. **If you make a mistake, stop and go back.** The most important thing is that the decision-makers know what you're trying to communicate. So, if you make a mistake, go back and say it again.
10. **Gain experience.** Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking.