

Helpful Speech Techniques for Student Participants

1. Practice your selection every day at home for your parents. Do your very best each time.
2. Stand up tall, with your hands comfortably at your sides in a relaxed posture. Look at your entire audience.
3. Say the required introduction and then pause briefly before you begin the selection. At the end of the selection, hold your last motion or feeling for a few seconds. Then go back to your beginning position as you smile at your audience. Wait a few seconds before returning to your assigned seat.
4. Say your selection with appropriate expression or feeling. If your selection is a happy or sad one, be sure to show that feeling with your facial expressions and your voice. Other feelings that might go with your selection include fear, anger, wonder, worry, surprise or pride. Be sure your facial expression matches the feeling that you are trying to show. Have a friend or a parent or a teacher watch and listen to you and tell you whether you are emphasizing the correct feelings with your voice and your facial expression. Practicing in front of a mirror might be helpful as well.
5. The use of gestures will enhance your presentation if they are natural for your selection. Any gestures you use should add to your selection, making it more interesting, more believable, and more enjoyable for you and for your audience. Learn a few natural gestures right away, and practice saying your selection with them every time. Be careful not to add stiff or unnatural gestures. Fewer, more natural gestures are better than a lot of movement.
6. Be sure to speak slowly and clearly. Stop after each thought so that your audience can hear both the words and the thoughts you are expressing. Be careful to enunciate your words or to say every sound (beginning, middle, and ending) of every word in your selection. Using a voice recording device is a tremendous help in learning and practicing your selection. Since you will not be using a microphone, you need to make sure you are able to project your voice for an audience. You may want to practice in a large room and speak loud enough so that others can hear every word from across the room.
7. Since you have memorized and learned your selection, you should show confidence as you speak. Enjoy the experience of sharing what you have learned with the judges.