

What Is Public Speaking?

If you've been asked to give a public speech, you may wonder: *what is public speaking and why is public speaking important?* Those questions are quite logical if you've never thought much about public speaking before.

Public speaking is important in both business, education, and the public arena. There are many benefits to speaking in public whether you're an individual or a business.

In this article, we'll define public speaking for you. We'll discuss the importance of public speaking in general. We'll also cover the importance of public speaking in business. Plus, we'll share some resources to help you become a better public speaker. This includes some public speaking examples.

A Public Speaking Definition

What is public speaking? Basically, it's a presentation that's given live before an audience. Public speeches can cover a wide variety of different topics. The goal of the speech may be to educate, entertain, or influence the listeners. Often, visual aids in the form of an electronic slideshow are used to supplement the speech. This makes it more interesting to the listeners.

A public speaking presentation is different from an online presentation. The online presentation is available any time. A public speech is typically limited to a specific time or place. Online presentations often use slideshows. Or they use pre-recorded videos of a speaker. This includes recordings of a live public speaking presentation).

Because speaking in public is done before a live audience, you need to consider some special factors. We'll touch on those shortly. Now you've got an understanding of the meaning of public speaking so let's take a quick look at the history of (and the importance of) public speaking.

A History of Public Speaking

What is the history of public speaking? And why is public speaking important?

There's a good chance that there's been public speech, in one form or another, as long as there've been people. But most [public speaking experts](#) involved with public speaking in business communication, trace the origins of modern public speaking back to ancient Greece and Rome.

Of course, those societies didn't have slideshows to help with public speech. But they did have a need for speaking in public. As a result, they developed public speaking methods that are still studied today.

The ancient Greeks used public speech primarily to praise or persuade others. At one point, all Greek citizens had the right to suggest or oppose laws during their assemblies. This resulted in a need for skilled public speakers. Speaking in public became a desirable skill and was taught. Public speaking in the time of the Greeks was called rhetoric.

Later, when Rome came to power, speaking in public was used during the Roman senate sessions. The Romans adopted the public speaking rhetoric methods of the Greeks. In fact, most public speaking [teachers of the time were Greek](#)

The Latin style of public speaking was popular in the U.S. and Europe [until the mid-20th century](#). After World War II, a less formal and more conversational speaking style of speaking became popular. Also, electronic tools became available to enhance public presentations. Towards the end of the 20th century, those electronic tools migrated to the computer. They evolved into the computer software tools. [PowerPoint](#), is one of those tools that we know and use today.

Don't be fooled, though. Even though today's public speeches are less formal, they still need to be well organized. More on that later. Now let's take a look at the importance of public speaking.

The Importance of Public Speaking

If you ask most people, they'll probably say they don't like public speech. They may even admit to being afraid of it since fear of public speaking is a very common fear. Or they may just be shy or introverted. For those reasons, many people avoid speaking in public if they can. If you're one of those people who avoid speaking in public, you're missing out.

Over the years, public speaking in communication has played a major role in education, government, and business. Words have the power to inform, persuade, educate, and even entertain. And the spoken word can be even more powerful than the written word in the hands of the right speaker.

Whether you're a small business owner, or a student, you'll benefit from improving your public speaking skills. Some benefits to speaking in public include:

- improves confidence
- better research skills
- stronger deductive skills
- ability to advocate for causes
- and more

Speaking in public is especially important for businesses to market their offers. This allows them to get their message in front of potential customers. Sales people and executives are often expected to have good public speaking skills. To learn more about some of the benefits of speaking in public, review the following article:

Next, let's explore the methods you can use to become better at speaking in public.

How to Become Better at Public Speaking (5 Quick Tips)

Okay, so now you understand the benefits of public speaking. You might be a little more interested in the topic. Still, you might think it's not for you. Maybe you gave a speech once and it didn't go well. Maybe you're afraid of speaking in public. Or maybe you think you don't have a natural ability for giving speeches.

The truth is that speaking in public is a skill. And you can learn any skill. While some people may have more natural speaking ability than others, anyone can learn to be a better public speaker. It just takes some know-how and some effort.

To help you become better at giving public speeches, we'll take a look at these five areas:

1. writing the speech
2. overcoming a fear of speaking
3. practicing the speech
4. preparing your presentation slide designs
5. giving the speech

1. Write an Effective Speech

The first thing you'll want to do is work on writing a well-organized, engaging speech. Because even a great speaking voice or a great deal of charisma isn't enough if your material isn't any good.

2. Overcome the Fear of Speaking

Fear of public speaking is very real and can hold you back if you let it. If you don't feel confident when giving your speech, your listeners may pick up on that. This can make your presentation less effective. Fortunately, there are some techniques to help manage the fear of speaking in public. They also help you become more confident.

First, let's tackle fear of public speaking. The following tutorials can help you overcome a fear of public speaking.

3. Practice the Speech

Even if you're not afraid of speaking in public, practice helps you give a more effective speech. If you're in a rush, you may be tempted to skip practicing your speech to save time. While skipping practice may seem like a good idea, it's really not.

Practicing your speech improves your public presentation skills. It also increases your familiarity with the presentation. As a result, your speech will go smoothly.

4. Prepare Your Presentation Slide Designs

Your slide design needs to be on point. You'll want to make sure it looks professional and is easy to read. Luckily, you can find plenty of [modern and professional presentation templates](#) on Envato Elements and [GraphicRiver](#).

You'll also want to download [The Complete Guide to Making Great Presentations](#) eBook now. Download it for FREE with a subscription to the Tuts+ Business Newsletter. Learn how to get your ideas formed into a powerful presentation that'll move your audience.

Don't forget to make good use of tools like [PowerPoint](#), [Google Slides](#), or [Keynote](#). The right template for your slide deck can make a huge difference in your presentation.

5. Give the Speech

You've written a good speech. You feel more confident about giving a speech in public, and you've practiced. You're ready to actually give the speech. There are some tips and tricks you can use on the day of your speech to make it go more smoothly, though. Remember, you're giving a presentation before a live audience at a specific place and time. So, you've got some concerns about the speaking venue that those who give online presentations don't have to worry about. Some common concerns for public speakers include:

- Will the audience be able to hear me?
- Does the venue have the equipment I need?
- Are there enough seats for all my listeners?

Public Speaking Examples

Public speaking examples are great for learning or improving a new skill. That applies to speaking in public as well. If you get the chance to listen to some top-rated public speakers, you should do it. You can observe how other speakers go about giving their speech. In the process, you'll improve your own speaking skills.

One great source of recorded public speeches is [Ted Talks](#), which is a series of short presentations on a wide variety of topics. Ted Talks are known for attracting world-class and celebrity speakers.

