

Presenting a QCE Speech: Top Tips

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PRESENTING A QCE SPEECH

ATARNotes

Ahh... writing a speech For the public speakers out there this kind of assessment task isn't likely to cause that chest-tightening, jittery, *"is it hot in here?"* kind of reaction. But hey, we all have strengths, and there's always room for improvement.

What makes a speech different from an essay?

The difference between a speech and an essay is the presentation, and the consideration given for the intended audience. With an essay, you're writing for a marker to read your work from a physical copy. With a speech, your physical presence entirely dictates the way your ideas are received by your audience. You need to give consideration to your body language and the manipulation of your own voice. This is as important as giving consideration to sentence and paragraph structure in an essay.

You may be asked to write a speech that discusses English texts. In essence, we can look at this like an essay because you're used to writing them. However, we need to adjust it so that you've clearly addressed the requirement for a speech and not a written response. You'll use the analysis of the texts like you would for an essay, and you'll still need some conceptual ideas to make your arguments. The way you deliver your information is what makes the difference between a speech and an essay.

How to prepare

Usually you're allowed to use palm cards for speeches, so prepare them well! As much as you'd love to be able to memorise your speech entirely in advance, you'll likely need some prompts when delivering your speech. Ensure you write clearly on your palm cards – there's few things more embarrassing than not being able to read your own hand writing! Type and then print your palm cards if it means you'll be able to read your prompts at a quick glance. Consider colour coding as well! If there's a part you always get stuck on, maybe use a yellow highlighter to keep it large and attention-demanding so you don't have trouble locating it when your memory fails you. Or, use some colour or symbols to remind yourself when it's time to change slides on your PowerPoint. I usually used a colourful asterisks at the bottom of my palm card to remind me to move onto the next slide.

As for memorising your speech, there's no exercise that works as well as reading it verbally to yourself. This technique cannot be beaten. As it works to print your speech into your memory, it also gives you a chance to become familiar with the pauses and the stops in your speech, as well as giving you the opportunity to play around with your voice projection and manipulation. Adjust your body in the mirror so that you feel comfortable but also look confident, and work on this power pose. Think about the way you stand: are your feet stitched together in the middle or are they at shoulder's width? Find a pose that's comfortable for you.

Supporting materials?

If your assessment requests, or permits, a supporting graph, video, or PowerPoint, then put just as much consideration into this as you would for the words of your speech. You don't want your supporting materials to distract, obviously, you want them to support your work. You may use them to clarify points, or give the audience a visual component to chew on while you orally guide them to consider your ideas.

Don't let yourself be distracted by the supporting material. Practicing your speech at home with the supporting materials allows you to connect the oral presentation with the physical presentation seamlessly. Feel comfortable in your preparation that you'll know when to change slides, and always, always, prepare for technical failures. Ensure that when you click "next" on your PowerPoint, that it does. You don't wait to think you're 5 slides in and realise you're still on the first slide. A quick glance to the screen is never inappropriate! Don't panic!

I'm so nervous!

Let's talk about power poses. Usually being more open forces you to feel more confident as you're physically demanding space. If your elbows are tucked by your side with your palm cards sitting on your belly button, and your legs are stuck together like chopsticks, you'll not give the same confident vibe! Imagine a peer that will stand in front of the class in a way that demands space. Then imagine a peer that stands like a pin. Now imagine which presenter engages you more. You want to be that student! In terms of physicality, remember that your arms are fluid and don't need to be oiled, don't be afraid of using them even in small ways to express confidence.

Let's talk about your breathing. Basically, remember to do it. Every now and then, become attuned with the speed of your voice and remember the moments of pauses and stops in the speech. Savour them – these can work to engage your audience, but they also keep you calm.

Let's talk about why you're nervous. You're speaking in front of a whole bunch of people – maybe some are your friends, maybe some aren't, maybe some you've never even spoken to before. Can you just really not be bothered act enthused for the duration of 5 minutes? Or perhaps you're certain you'll mess up and it will be embarrassing. Fortunately for you, there's going to be a few other peers that struggle with nerves too. You're not going to sit there and judge them, and they surely won't for you either. It's all going to be over in a very short time, and then you can sit down and bury your head in your pencil case. Even if you aren't confident – fake it. Perpetuate your confidence in your physical presence and in your preparation, and you'll somehow convince yourself you can do it – and then you will do it. And you'll do it well.

Where will you look? It's good to know in advance how many people are in the room and what the lay out is. I know it gets a bit intense to maintain eyeball-to-eyeball contact with your teacher for the whole duration – which is fine seeing as no one is recommending you do just that. Moving your head around the classroom shows a sense of confidence, and you don't even have to look at anyone directly! Look just above their heads to the wall behind them. Seriously, it's fool proof. Or, look at the empty desk!

But I don't want to look stupid...

I know, getting up in front of your peers with an active voice and flying gestations isn't how you want to spend period 3 on a Wednesday. But here's the deal. We all want good marks – and if you think you can get them by giving your all for 5 minutes, then no one will be judging you. Instead, you'll have peers wishing they could put aside their inhibitions just for five minutes like you have so they can have their best shot at a great mark. That's the thing, it's over so quickly, so you've just got to fire away.