



رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي

"My Lord, expand my chest for me and ease my task for me." (Tā Hā 20:25-26)

Speak with Confidence

A practical guide to public speaking: plan a talk people remember, calm your nerves and deliver it well.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Preface

All praise is for Allah, and may peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad, his family and his Companions.

Sooner or later, everyone has to speak in front of others: a class presentation, a job interview, a project defence, a speech at an event, a short reminder in the masjid. Many capable people avoid these moments, or rush through them, because they feel nervous or do not know how to prepare.

Speaking well is a skill, not a gift a few people are born with. This guide gives you a simple method you can use for any talk: find your message, build the talk, deliver it with your voice and body, handle nerves, and rehearse properly. It ends with a two-week practice plan, a talk planner and a feedback sheet.

كَانَ كَلَامُ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَلَامًا فَضْلًا يَفْهَمُهُ كُلُّ مَنْ سَمِعَهُ

“The speech of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ was clear and distinct; everyone who heard it understood it.”

Narrated by Abū Dāwūd (4839) from ‘Ā’ishah; graded ḥasan.

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Step 1 Find your one message

Explanation

Most weak talks try to say everything. Strong talks say one thing well. Before you write a single slide or note, decide the one idea you want your audience to remember tomorrow.

What to do

- 1 Ask: **Who** is listening, **what** do they already know, and **why** should they care?
- 2 Write your message in **one sentence of 15 words or fewer**. For example: "Fifteen minutes of revision a day will save your hifdh."
- 3 Test it: could someone repeat it to a friend after your talk? If not, make it simpler.
- 4 Cut anything that does not support that sentence, however interesting it is.

Example

Topic: "Social media." Too broad.

Message: "Turning off notifications gave me back two hours a day, and it can do the same for you." Clear, specific and memorable.

What we learn

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | A talk should leave one clear message. |
| 2 | Know your audience before you plan what to say. |
| 3 | Cut what does not serve the message. |

Step 2 Build the talk

إِنَّ مِنَ الْبَيَانِ لَسِحْرًا

"Indeed, some eloquence is magic."

Narrated by al-Bukhārī (5146).

Explanation

A simple structure helps your audience follow you, and helps you remember what comes next. For most talks of 3 to 10 minutes, use this shape:

Part	What it does	Share of the time
Opening	Catch attention with a question, a short story, a striking fact or a verse; then say your message	About 10%
Point 1	First reason, idea or step, with an example or story	About 25%
Point 2	Second point, with an example	About 25%
Point 3	Third point, with an example	About 25%
Close	Repeat the message in new words and tell them one thing to do	About 15%

- **Three points** is easy to follow and easy to remember. Two or four can work; seven rarely does.
- Give every point an **example**: a story, a number, a picture. People remember stories long after they forget lists.
- Use clear **signposts**: “First...”, “The second reason is...”, “Finally...”.
- Write your opening and closing sentences word for word. For the middle, use short notes, not a full script.

What we learn

1	Opening, three points and a close fit almost any talk.
2	Examples and stories make points stick.
3	Know your first and last sentences by heart.

Step 3 Use your voice

Explanation

Your voice carries your meaning. A good message spoken too fast, too quietly or in one flat tone is lost. You do not need a special voice; you need to use the one you have deliberately.

- **Pace**: nervous speakers rush. Slow down to a calm conversational pace, especially in the opening.
- **Pause**: stop for a second or two before and after your most important sentence. Silence draws attention.

- **Volume:** speak to the back row. If people at the back can hear you comfortably, everyone can.
- **Emphasis:** lean on the key word in a sentence (“You **CAN** do this” sounds different from “**YOU** can do this”).
- **Filler words:** “um”, “like”, “you know”. Replace them with a short pause; it sounds more confident.

What we learn

1	Slow down and pause; most speakers go too fast.
2	Speak to the back row.
3	A pause is stronger than a filler word.

Step 4 Use your body

Explanation

- **Stand steady:** feet about shoulder-width apart, weight even. Avoid rocking or pacing without purpose.
- **Eyes:** look at one person for a sentence, then another, across the room. Do not read to the floor, the ceiling or the slides.
- **Hands:** keep them relaxed at your sides or loosely in front, and let them move naturally to show size, number or contrast.
- **Face:** match your expression to your words. A warm smile in the opening helps both you and your audience relax.
- **Slides:** few words, large text, one idea per slide. You are the talk; the slides support you.

Tip: dress and adab

Dress modestly and neatly, appropriate to the occasion. Begin with the greeting of salām where suitable, and speak with respect for your audience, including those who disagree with you.

What we learn

1	A steady stance and eye contact build trust.
2	Natural, purposeful gestures support your words.

Step 5 Turn nerves into energy

رَبِّ اشْرَحْ لِي صَدْرِي وَيَسِّرْ لِي أَمْرِي وَاخْلُلْ
عُقْدَةً مِّنْ لِّسَانِي يَفْقَهُوا قَوْلِي

“My Lord, expand my chest for me, ease my task for me, and untie the knot from my tongue, so that they may understand my speech.”

Sūrat Ṭā Hā 20:25–28: the du‘ā’ of Mūsā, peace be upon him, before he spoke to Fir‘awn.

Explanation

Even Mūsā, peace be upon him, asked Allah to untie his tongue before the hardest speech of his life. Nerves are normal and even useful: the same energy that makes your heart race can make your talk lively. The aim is not to feel nothing, but to stay in control.

Before you speak

- **Prepare well.** Most nervousness is fear of forgetting. Rehearsal (Step 6) is the strongest cure.
- Make wuḍū’, pray if it is time, and recite the du‘ā’ of Mūsā above.
- **Breathe slowly:** in through the nose for four counts, hold for four, out for six. Repeat four or five times.
- Arrive early, check the room and equipment, and talk to a few people before you start.

While you speak

- Begin with your memorised opening sentence. The first 30 seconds are the hardest; after that it gets easier.
- Find two or three friendly faces and speak to them.
- If you lose your place, pause, look at your notes, and continue. The audience rarely notices.

What we learn

1

Nerves are normal; preparation keeps them under control.

2

Slow breathing calms the body within a minute.

3

Rely on Allah and ask Him to ease your tongue.

Step 6 Rehearse the right way

Explanation

Reading your notes silently is not rehearsal. You must say the talk **out loud**, on your feet, at the speed you will use on the day.

- 1 Rehearse **out loud at least three times**, standing up, with a timer.
- 2 Record yourself on your phone (video if possible). Watch it once for your **message** and once for your **voice and body**.
- 3 Do one rehearsal in front of a friend or family member and ask them to fill in the feedback sheet at the end of this guide.
- 4 Cut until you finish within the time limit with a little to spare. Running over is disrespectful to the audience and the next speaker.
- 5 On the day, do a short final run-through of your opening and close.

What we learn

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | Rehearse aloud, standing, with a timer. |
| 2 | Recording yourself shows what you cannot feel. |
| 3 | Finishing on time is part of a good talk. |

Step 7 Handle questions

- 1 **Listen** to the whole question without interrupting. Pause before you answer.
- 2 **Repeat or rephrase** it briefly so everyone hears it and you are sure you understood.
- 3 **Answer briefly**, then link back to your message if you can.
- 4 If you do not know, say so honestly: "I don't know, but I will find out and get back to you." Never invent an answer.
- 5 Thank the person, then move on.

Remember

Saying "Allah knows best" or "I don't know" when you are unsure is a sign of integrity, not weakness. The scholars of the past were known for it.

Plan Your talk planner

Part	Your notes
Audience: who, what they know, why they care	
My one message (15 words or fewer)	
Opening (word for word)	
Point 1 and example	
Point 2 and example	
Point 3 and example	
Close and one action (word for word)	
Time limit	

Two-week practice plan

Days	What to do
1 to 2	Choose a topic you care about. Write your one-sentence message and fill in the talk planner
3 to 4	Write your opening and close word for word; make short notes for the three points
5 to 7	Rehearse aloud once a day with a timer; cut to fit the time
8 to 9	Record yourself; watch for message, voice and body; fix one thing each time
10 to 11	Rehearse in front of a friend or family member; use the feedback sheet
12 to 13	Two final rehearsals; practise answering three likely questions
14	Give the talk. Afterwards, write down one thing that went well and one to improve

Give this page to a friend or family member who watches you rehearse. Score each item from 1 (needs work) to 5 (excellent).

What to look for	Score (1 to 5)	Comment
The message was clear; I could repeat it		
The opening caught my attention		
The three points were easy to follow		
Examples or stories made it memorable		
Pace and pauses were comfortable		
I could hear every word		
Eye contact and posture were confident		
The close told me what to do next		
It finished within the time limit		

One thing the speaker did well:

.....

One thing to improve next time:

.....

Activities

1 Choose a topic and write your message in one sentence of 15 words or fewer.

.....

.....

2 Write an opening that starts with a question, a story or a striking fact.

.....

.....

3 Record a one-minute talk on your phone. What is one thing you will change?

.....

.....

4 Write three questions someone might ask about your talk, and your short answers.

.....

.....

Sources

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وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

“And my success is only through Allah.” (Hūd 11:88)

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Say it clearly, say it well.

This free guide from the Himaayah Skills School gives students and young professionals a simple method for any talk, presentation or speech.

- Find your one main message
- Build the talk: opening, three points, close
- Use your voice, pauses and body well
- Turn nerves into energy
- Rehearse with a 2-week plan and a feedback sheet



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