

the HUB

THINK. WRITE. SPEAK.

Public Speaking: Tips for Engaging Your Audience

Your presentation's structure and information are essential for getting and keeping an audience engaged, yet the first few minutes can set the tone and encourage the audience to be involved.

Try to work one of these into your presentation:

- Use an interactive tool to get audience feedback and responses (e.g., Poll Everywhere, Padlet, Wordle)
- Have partners work on a Think-Pair-Share activity.
- Have groups discuss a question or topic (or have individuals develop their own question); then have them write their ideas on the board.
- Start with a mindfulness activity.
- Begin by playing music or showing an image that relates to your presentation and ask the audience about it.
- Develop a group-generated mind map on the board.
- Ask your audience to imagine a scenario.
- Have the audience write down a question they want to ask you about your topic.
- Have the audience write down something they assume about your topic; at the end or part way through the presentation the entire group can share and discuss these assumptions to determine if they are accurate.

Try also to weave these different activities throughout the presentation in order to keep your listeners' attention.

Some additional tips for engaging audiences:

- Make certain to have audience members share what they came up with after they've worked in pairs or groups.
- Arrange seating so groups/partners face each other – the more comfortable people are, the longer they'll stay engaged in the task you give them.
- Link the topic to your audience's self-interests – most people like to talk about themselves, so tap into this and also help them to understand why they should care.
- Get your audience moving – have them write on the board, partner up with people across the room, or simply take a break during a longer presentation.