



Why Is Public Speaking Important?

Soft skills are increasingly becoming the hard skills for today's youth. While your technical skills may get your foot in the door of opportunities, your people skills are what open most of the doors to come. Your work ethic, your attitude, your communication skills, your emotional intelligence and a whole host of other personal attributes are the soft skills that ensure your holistic development.

What Are Soft Skills?

Soft skills are character traits and interpersonal skills that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people. Soft skills characterize one's relationship with other people. They enable you to work well with groups, solve problems, manage your time, and take personal responsibility for your work.

Why Are Soft Skills Important?

Soft skills are more critical today than ever as they equip you with meaningful ways to remain competitive and be productive. If you are a high school student, these skills will allow you to stay on the top of the class, will give you a confidence boost and will enhance your personality, which means better chances of admission to a good college. If you are in college, these skills will enable you to build your profile and again, they will polish your personality and set you apart from the candidates while applying for your dream job. If you are a working professional, you need these skills to be on top of your work, manage time efficiently, take decisions that'll benefit your company, manage your team, maintain a pleasant work culture and stand out in whatever it is that you do.

For the purpose of this guide, we will focus on Public Speaking.

What Is Public Speaking?

Remember all those times when you had to stand in front of a bunch of people and speak? You prepare and gather material on what to say and express your thoughts in front of an audience - this is public speaking. To be more definitive, it is an act of presenting your thoughts in before an audience in order to inform, influence or entertain them.

Why Is Public Speaking Important?

Now that we have established the meaning of public speaking, let us move on to see why these skills are vital for you. Here is how:





1. **Builds self-confidence.** We all remember our first stage experience, when we were in school and went up on the stage to address whole assembly full of students and teachers. In spite of being prepared, we fumble and stammer during our first performance, and this is because of the stage fright and lack of confidence. But as you continue to get involved in public speaking activities, you become more fluent, a better speaker and more confident.
2. **Fosters Leadership.** All the great leaders have always been the best speakers. They are able to address their team with confidence and inspire them. Imagine your boss or teacher fumbling a lot while telling you something important, will you be able to keep your interest alive in their speech? Probably not.
3. **Develops critical thinking.** With good Public Speaking, you sharpen your critical thinking and problem solving approach. This happens because while delivering a speech to a group of people on any topic, you articulate it in a way that everyone understand it and to keep the speech free of plagiarism, you come up with innovative ideas and solutions to the given problem statement.
4. **Cultivates spontaneity.** Public Speaking teaches you to be spontaneous. You cannot really 'learn' how to be witty and spontaneous, but once you get involved in various discussions and talks, over the period of time, you learn from your experiences and get equipped with great presence of mind.
5. **Increases amiability.** Who doesn't like a motivated, confident speaker who talks about relevant topics and articulates them in the best way possible? Each year we witness so many commencement speeches at various colleges, each one unique in its own way, and we love those speeches. People admire great speakers, they listen to them, follow their advice and place their trust in them, and who doesn't like getting attention and respect!
6. **Grows knowledge base.** While preparing for a speech or talk, you have to be thorough with the topic on which you are presenting. When you are researching about your topic, you increase your knowledge in that area without even realizing it.
7. **Maximizes interview skills.** Moving on to more professional gains, better public speaking shapes your personality - you no longer fumble while speaking in front of people. This quality works like a charm during interviews; your confidence, critical thinking, good vocabulary helps you stand out amongst the competition.

How Can I Develop Public Speaking Skills?





If you are convinced about the importance of public speaking and are looking for way to improve these skills, we have an answer for you!

1. **Prepare.** Before you get on the stage, spend some time putting your speech together such that it flows logically. Intersperse it with stories, anecdotes, and famous quotes to make it interesting and keep your audience hooked to your talk.
2. **Put your best foot forward.** Know your strengths and weaknesses and try to use the strengths to your advantage while delivering your speech.
3. **Tailor your speech according to your audience.** A good speaker always keeps the audience in mind while preparing the speech. You want to edit your talk to suit the demographics that you are addressing. For example, when speaking in front of a class full of students, you have to be relatively informal and funny, whereas you need to be formal and smart while presenting in front of your Board of Directors.
4. **Practice.** "Practice makes perfect." We have heard this quote multiple times and I cannot emphasize enough on its importance. Before delivering the actual speech, practice it in front your friends or family or even a mirror. Observe your mannerisms, body language and pronunciation as you practice.
5. **Identify your speaking patterns.** All of us have certain speaking habits that we repeat without even realizing it. While some of them are good habits like saying 'Excuse me' after coughing or sneezing; others like using 'Umm', 'Uh' that are not good for public speaking. So identify your good and bad speaking patterns, and get rid of the bad ones.
6. **Assess your performance.** The best way of excelling in anything is to keep assessing your performance from time to time and improve upon it. I would advise you to listen to a recorded version of your speech and take a note of areas that need improvement and refer to this the next time you prepare, so that you do not repeat any mistakes.
7. **Smile.** Who likes a cross or dull speaker? Flaunt a smile every time you go on stage, it benefits you in multiple ways – you feel good and confident about yourself and your audience is drawn towards you.
8. **Keep your talk short and sweet.** Do you like it when your teacher or boss go on and on for hours? Probably not. To avoid committing the same mistake as them, keep your speeches brief and to the point.





9. **Make eye contact with your audience.** This is a great way of keeping your audience involved while you are speaking. Also, it makes you look confident that is a key quality of a good speaker.
10. **Be energetic.** Nobody likes a speaker who is dull during his talk, so try to maintain an electric energy level while speaking. Enthusiasm is contagious; use this to your benefit!

Public speaking skills are going to help you throughout your life, therefore do not ignore them. They will help you clear interviews, make friends, build connections, become confident and enhance your personality like nothing else.

