

**M3 Lesson 5: The Basics of Public Speaking**

Core Competencies:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * Communication
 | * Thinking
 | * Personal & Social
 |

Big Ideas:

* Achieving our learning goals requires effort and perseverance.

Curricular Competencies:

* Use self-assessment and reflection to develop awareness of their strengths, preferences and skills
* Apply decision-making strategies to a life, work, or community problem and adjust the strategies to adapt to new situations

In this lesson, students will learn about a common fear – public speaking. After learning about the fear itself and receiving strategies to counteract the fear, students will constructively critique videos of public speakers to decide if their message was delivered successfully.

A public speaking class discussion is great in this lesson. Ask about students’ comfort level with public speaking, and what they think makes an excellent public speaker. In the assignment, students will watch videos of speakers with different speaking styles 😊

For students:

**Glossophobia...do you have it?**

There's approximately a 25% chance that you do! Glossophobia derives from the Greek γλῶσσα glōssa, meaning tongue, and φόβος phobos, fear or dread. It's the fear that many of us have of public speaking!

We've all experienced that feeling...when we are performing, or worse yet, expected to perform an oral presentation or a speech in front of other people. Fear of public speaking is frequently but incorrectly cited as people’s biggest fear. While public speaking is often not people’s biggest fear, it is does commonly rank quite high on the list!

While some people experience a debilitating form of glossophobia, even a mild form can have devastating effects. Fear of public speaking can prevent you from taking risks to share your ideas, to speak about your work, and to present your solutions to problems that affect many people. As a result, it can affect how much you grow personally and professionally, and how much impact you can make. At the same time, any negative public speaking experiences will make it less likely that you will speak in public in the future as fear teaches you to protect yourself from risky situations.

There are many reasons why people become afraid when having to speak in public, but theories have identified four contributing factors:

***1. Physiology***

Fear and anxiety involve the autonomic nervous system becoming aware of a potentially threatening stimulus. When confronted with a threat, our bodies prepare for battle. This leads to the emotional experience of fear, and it interferes with our ability to perform comfortably in front of audiences. Eventually, it prevents people from pursuing opportunities for public speaking.

***2. Thoughts***

Another factor involves people’s beliefs about public speaking and about themselves as speakers. The fear often arises when people overestimate the stakes of communicating their ideas in front of others, viewing the speaking event as a potential threat to their credibility, image, and chance to reach an audience. Negative views of oneself as a speaker (*I am not good at speaking in front of crowds, I am not a good public speaker, I am boring*, etc.) can also raise anxiety and augment the fear of speaking in public.

***3. Situations***

While there are people who by nature tend to be more anxious, or people who don’t think they are good at public speaking, there are certain situations that are likely to make most of us more anxious when presenting in a public forum.

* **Lack of experience.**As with anything else, experience builds confidence.
* **Degree of evaluation.**When there is a real or imagined evaluation component to the situation, the fear is stronger.
* **Status difference.** If you are about to speak in front of people of higher status, you may feel a higher dose of fear tingling through your body.
* **New ideas.** If you are sharing ideas that you have not yet shared in public, you may worry more about how people will receive them.
* **New audiences.**You may already have experience speaking in public and presenting to familiar audiences. If you are standing in front of an audience, though, that is very different from the people you usually speak to, your confidence may be a little shaky.

***4. Skills***

Finally, another factor that contributes to the fear of public speaking is how skilled you are in this area. While many people consider themselves naturally good speakers, there is always room for growth. The people who work on their skills, instead of relying on natural talent, are the speakers who stand out the most.

Adapted from: [https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/smashing-the-brainblocks/201711/why-are-we-scared-public-speaking](https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/smashing-the-brainblocks/201711/why-are-we-scared-public-speaking%C2%A0)

Let's approach public speaking first by thinking about effective speakers we have seen in the past. Perhaps you had a teacher who could deliver amazing presentations, maybe you have been mesmerized by a speech from a local politician or have viewed an incredible TEDTalk. Either way, by first looking at the differences between effective (and not effective) public speaking techniques, we will build on our own resiliency for our public speaking journey.

Assignment:

In the following assignment, you will explore the concept of public speaking and why it's an important skill in your career-life journey. Public speaking doesn't come naturally or easily...it's a skill that requires consistent effort and perseverance over time. There are many considerations to public speaking, such as eye contact, posture, professional appearance, and volume, and today you will use these considerations to evaluate four different public speakers.

**Part 1**

In Part 1 of this assignment, you will be watching four video clips to learn about and evaluate some different aspects of public speaking skills.

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION:

Because body language is such an important aspect of public speaking, **you will watch the first two videos on mute** and only assess the speaker visually in terms of:

* **Gestures:**How does the speaker use body language and their hands during a speech to engage the audience?
* **Eye contact:**Is the speaker looking out at the audience and connecting, or looking down at the floor?
* **Smiling:**Does the speaker smile at the audience?
* **Speaking from memory:**Does the speaker seem to have their speech mostly memorized so they can make eye contact, or are they reading directly from a script?
* **Movement:** Does the speaker move around the stage to connect with different sections of the audience, or do they stand in one spot?
* **Professional appearance:**Is the speaker dressed to convey professionalism?
* **Posture:**Is the speaker standing up straight, or are they hunched over?

**A)** **Non-Verbal Evaluation:**copy the following table and watch the two videos below **on mute (without any sound)**. Rate each speaker on a scale from 1-5 where 1 = bad and 5 = good.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Speaker | Gestures | Eye contact | Smiling | Speaking from memory | Movement | Professional appearance | Posture |
| Bill Gates |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| John Doe |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

**Video #1:**[Mosquitos, malaria and education | Bill Gates](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tsgvhP07BC8)

(watch minute 7:06-8:06)

**Video #2:** [Bad Speech Example](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SojAr3DdxrA)

minute (0:00-1:00)

VERBAL COMMUNICATION:

In the next two videos, you will watch the first two videos and pay special attention to the speaker in terms of:

* **Tone:**What is the speaker’s attitude to what they’re talking about? Do they seem happy, hopeful, curious, upset, angry, negative?
* **Pace:** How fast is the speaker delivering their words and can the listener keep up with them?
* **Volume:** How loud is the person speaking and how appropriate is their volume for the speech topic and audience?
* **Inflection:**How does the speaker’s voice rise and fall during a speech to emphasize certain points?

**B) Verbal Evaluation: copy the following table and watch the two videos below with sound.**

Rate each speaker on a scale from 1-5 where 1 = bad/negative and 5 = good/positive.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Speaker | Tone | Volume | Pace | Inflection |
| Michelle Obama |   |   |   |   |
| Phil Davison |   |   |   |   |

**Video #1:**

[Watch first lady Michelle Obama’s full speech at the 2016 Democratic National Convention](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=4ZNWYqDU948) (minute 1:49-2:49)

**Video #2:**

[Raw Video: Candidate's Extremely Fiery Speech](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h54mVgYkCvQ)

(minute 0:00-1:00)

**Part 2**

In Part 2 of your assignment, you will create a short video piece answering the guiding questions below. This is a safe place to start (or continue) your public speaking journey as your video will just be viewed by your teacher! A great way to approach your video is to think about the aspects of public speaking in Part 1. Do the best you can, and understand that we are just working on, not perfecting, our public speaking skills!

Questions for your video:

* Why is public speaking an important skill? Where are some personal and professional scenarios in life where people may need to speak in front of a crowd?
* Have there been any situations in your life where you had to speak in front of a crowd? How did you feel?
* What types of jobs do you think would require public speaking skills? How would public speaking factor into these jobs?
* Public speaking is an important skill in our career-life journey in order to prepare us for job interviews. Which aspects of verbal and non-verbal communication do you feel would be most important during a job interview?
* What did you find most interesting in the communication styles of each speaker in the videos?

Public speaking is a lifelong journey that requires goal setting and resiliency. The effective speakers that you see in videos or in your life have had a lifetime of practicing, and maybe even professional training, to improve their public speaking skills. It's perfectly normal to be nervous about speaking in front of a crowd, but you will never improve and become more comfortable without practice!

Assessment:

