

# PRESENTATION GUIDE: RESOURCE 9

## Presentation Warm-Ups and Practice Drills

**Public speaking and communication is a full body experience, especially since it is something that makes many of us tense and nervous.**

**The purpose of warming up is to:**

Relax and cope with anxiety

Promote good vocal technique

Get focused and “in the zone”

Prepare for the needs of the speech

Ideally, a warm-up should take around 10-15 minutes to be truly effective.

The focus of a warm-up should be on any or all of the following:

- Establishing a neutral standing or seated position (i.e. no leaning, hands in pockets, hunched shoulders, fidgeting).
- Breathing exercises (i.e. deep breathing and slow hissing releases to practice breath control)
- Stomach muscles (i.e. going through consonants with a hand on your stomach)
- Stretching and relaxing the jaw, tongue, face, shoulders, neck, knees, hips, feet and hands—basically anywhere that gets tense when speaking or interferes with good vocal production, facial expressions, gestures, and movement
- Face and facial expression—wake up your mouth, eyebrows, eyes
- Gestures (i.e. review different gestures, such as pointing, painting a picture, circling the hand)
- Enunciation (i.e. tongue twisters, diction exercises and consonants, gradually increasing/decreasing in speed)
- Volume, including practicing speaking quietly with energy, gradually increasing volume, maintaining volume at the ends of sentences, and not yelling or pushing the voice.



Warm-up Activity	Purpose
<p><b>Tongue Twisters</b> Run through tongue twisters of different lengths to practice consonants and breath control. Variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Say the same tongue twisters using different emotions (i.e. sad, excited, angry, relaxed).</li> <li>• Repeat the tongue twister while using gestures and giving eye contact to different people or objects.</li> <li>• Repeat the tongue twister while varying volume and/or speed (i.e. slow and quiet, fast and loud, fast and quiet, slow and loud).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Practice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Precise diction.</li> <li>• Sounding louder.</li> <li>• Emotional tone.</li> <li>• Eye contact.</li> <li>• Variation in speed and volume.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tell Me About a Time When...(eye contact version)</b> Tell a 2-minute story describing a memory of an event. Prompts should be concrete and short (i.e. it was cold, it was raining, you were lonely, you lost track of time) and stories should be true. Tell the story to another person, trying to use eye contact in a comfortable way (looking away or down at appropriate moments, and communicating the emotion of the story while looking at the other person. At the end, have the other person give feedback on whether the eye contact felt natural.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice natural eye contact.</li> <li>• Get feedback on eye contact.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Vocal Warm-Ups</b> Warm up your voice, especially in the morning, end of day, or when you are sick.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sigh using your voice, starting at the very top of your voice and sliding down to the bottom.</li> <li>• Yawn loudly (lift the roof of your mouth to make yourself yawn)</li> <li>• Trill your r's and buzz your lips.</li> <li>• Sing! (doesn't matter if you think you can't, it's a good warm up regardless...)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice healthy vocal habits.</li> <li>• Create a rounder tone.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Physical Warm-Ups</b></p> <p>Use physical stretches to relax any areas of tension and physical exercises to energize you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Close your eyes and take deep breaths, tune into any places you notice tension and relax them.</li><li>• While taking deep breaths, roll your shoulders, followed by rolling your neck and your wrists and ankles.</li><li>• Reach up to the sky, reach to the middle, and reach to the ground. Slowly roll up.</li><li>• Bounce in place, making sure your knees are loose.</li><li>• Make a “big” face by stretching your face wide open and then a “small” face by scrunching everything.</li><li>• Tense everything with shoulders up and fists clenched, then relax everything.</li><li>• Do energizing things -- run in place, do jumping jacks, wiggle yourself out.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cope with anxiety.</li><li>• Establish a relaxed energy before speaking.</li><li>• Wake up the brain before speaking.</li></ul>
<p><b>Count the Sounds</b></p> <p>Close your eyes and listen deeply to all the sounds around you. Count how many sounds you can hear. After you’ve counted, turn those sounds into a song or a pattern (i.e. if you listen to a dryer for long enough, you can make it sound like a waltz).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cope with anxiety.</li><li>• Practice listening skills.</li><li>• Quiet your brain.</li></ul>
<p><b>Walk to the Front</b></p> <p>In a group, line up in a single file line. One by one, practice walking up to the front of the room and land at a spot in the center with hands at the side. After pausing and looking at the audience, say “hello” or some other practice line using a gesture, then return to your seat. Repeat one by one, making sure to land at the spot in the middle first before talking and making sure hands are all at the side.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practice pausing to acknowledge the audience instead of rushing into the words.</li><li>• Practice grounding yourself before speaking.</li><li>• Practice hands at side.</li></ul>



<p><b>Contrasting Colors</b> <i>Note: To understand this warm-up, please read “Resource 11: Vocal Technique for Presenters”</i></p> <p>Using a book of fairy tales (or any other random text), select 2-4 lines for practice. First, read the text aloud in a flat voice with little emotion. Then, try reading the text aloud using different colors of your voice -- first, try reading as “red” (passionate and excited), then try “gray” (urgent and forceful), then “blue” (serious and calm), then “green” (breezy and conversational), and finally “orange” (kind and encouraging). After you’ve tried each color, practice switching from one color to another in the middle of the text. For an extra challenge, have others guess which colors you are applying to the text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practice using different colors, including ones that don’t come as naturally.</li><li>• Practice transitioning in vocal tone</li></ul>
<p><b>Paraphrase It</b></p> <p>Open a text to any random page and read the content. Without any preparation, try rewording or paraphrasing the text in your own words. Repeat this activity, trying to reword the content in as few words as possible, without any filler words. If working alone, audio record yourself and listen back to hear if there are any distracting habits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practice being concise and breaking filler word habits.</li><li>• Paraphrasing helps you speak from notes without getting caught up in trying to say the exact words you’ve written.</li></ul>
<p><b>Confidence Contest</b></p> <p>In a group circle, have one person start with a simple argument or statement of opinion, like “Blueberries are the best fruit because they are good for you and full of antioxidants.” The next person says the same exact sentence, but tries to say the statement even more confidently (volume, facial expressions, and landing the ends of sentences help here). Repeat for 4 people and then have someone create a new sentence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practice speaking energetically and confidently.</li><li>• Practice landing the ends of sentences and not losing volume at the ends of sentences.</li><li>• Practice doing more than you think you’re doing to sound confident.</li></ul>

