# FIND YOUR VOICE

Your voice has value. Public speaking is not about sounding like someone else. It is about sharing your ideas clearly, confidently and respectfully. Use this guide to practise at Gavel Club meetings, in school and beyond.

## 1 Start with your purpose

Before you prepare, answer three questions: Who am I speaking to? What do I want them to understand or feel? What single idea should they remember? A focused message makes every other choice easier.

> Try it: Complete this sentence: “After listening to me, I want my audience to _____.”

## 2 Find an idea worth sharing

- Personal experience: A challenge, a mistake, a discovery or a small act of kindness can become a memorable story.
- Curiosity: Explain something surprising you learned, and why it matters to others.
- Conviction: Speak about a positive change you would like to see, using examples and respectful reasoning.

## 3 Give your speech a clear shape

- Opening: Capture attention with a brief story, question, image or surprising statement.
- Middle: Develop two or three connected points with concrete examples.
- Conclusion: Reinforce your message and leave the audience with a meaningful final thought.

## 4 The one-minute message challenge

Choose a familiar subject. Speak for one minute with a beginning, one supporting example and a conclusion. Repeat using fewer unnecessary words, while keeping your natural personality.

> My topic: _____
> My main message: _____
> My strongest example: _____

# SPEAK WITH CONFIDENCE

Great delivery is not louder speaking or bigger gestures. It is choosing a voice, pace and presence that help the audience understand and connect with you.

## 5 Make your voice work for you

- Pace: Slow down for important ideas and vary your speed naturally.
- Pauses: Allow a moment after a key message or audience reaction; silence can add meaning.
- Volume and emphasis: Speak clearly to the whole room; stress the words that carry your point.
- Expression: Let your tone match your story without forcing emotion.

## 6 Use confident body language

- Stand comfortably, with balanced posture. Keep your hands relaxed until a gesture serves the message.
- Make eye contact across the room, one person or small group at a time.
- Move purposefully. Avoid pacing, fidgeting or turning away while speaking.

## 7 Turn information into a story

A simple story follows a person, a challenge, an action and a result. Include a few vivid details, but remove anything that does not support your message. Speak truthfully and respect others' privacy.

> Story practice: Describe a moment when you learned something unexpected. What happened? What changed? Why should the audience care?

## 8 Practise with a recording

Record a 90-second speech. First listen for clarity, pace and vocal variety. Then watch for posture, eye contact and distracting habits. Choose only one or two improvements for your next attempt.

# PRACTISE WITH PURPOSE

Improvement comes from deliberate practice, helpful feedback and the willingness to try again. You do not have to perfect everything in one rehearsal.

## 9 A seven-day speaking practice routine

- Day 1: Choose your message and write a three-part outline.
- Day 2: Practise three different openings and select the most engaging.
- Day 3: Develop a clear example or short story.
- Day 4: Rehearse vocal variety, pauses and meaningful emphasis.
- Day 5: Record a full attempt and review it kindly but critically.
- Day 6: Present to a fellow Gavelier or Counsellor and request specific feedback.
- Day 7: Apply one improvement and present again without stopping.

## 10 Ask for feedback you can use

Instead of “Was my speech good?”, ask “Was my main idea clear?”, “Where did your attention drift?” and “Which example stayed with you?” Thank the evaluator and decide which suggestions support your purpose.

## 11 Handle common speaking challenges

- Forgot your next line? Pause, remember the next idea and continue; your audience does not know your exact script.
- Speaking too fast? Mark two planned pauses in your outline and practise breathing between thoughts.
- Feeling nervous? Practise your opening, exhale slowly and focus on the people you want to help.
- Running out of time? Shorten examples rather than racing through the conclusion.

## 12 Your rehearsal self-check

☐ I have one clear message.
☐ My opening creates interest and my ending feels complete.
☐ My examples support my message.
☐ My voice and gestures feel natural.
☐ I speak within the allotted time.
☐ I can recover calmly from a small mistake.

# YOUR NEXT SPEAKING STEP

Public speaking is a skill for life. Every meeting, classroom presentation and conversation gives you a new opportunity to use it.

## 13 Before you take the stage

- Check your speaking time, venue, audience and any meeting or contest instructions.
- Practise aloud rather than reading your speech silently.
- Warm up gently, breathe steadily and have water available.
- Remember your opening and main message rather than worrying about every word.

## 14 While you are speaking

- Begin with a calm pause and look at your audience.
- Speak conversationally, as though sharing an important idea with friends.
- Notice audience reactions, but do not depend on applause or laughter.
- Finish your conclusion deliberately; allow the final message to land.

## 15 Beyond prepared speeches

Impromptu speaking: Practise responding to unfamiliar prompts with a point, a reason, an example and a conclusion. Listening: Observe how other speakers organise ideas and connect with audiences. Evaluation: Give fellow Gaveliers specific encouragement and practical suggestions.

## 16 My speaking growth record

My strongest speaking skill: _____
One skill I want to develop: _____
My next speaking opportunity: _____
One action I will take this week: _____

**“You do not need a perfect voice to share a meaningful message.”**

Reference: Toastmasters International educational guidance on speech preparation, delivery and evaluation. Follow your club’s Counsellor and applicable OGCPS contest rules for formal competitions.