

# 30-Day Public Speaking Challenge

Daily progress and reflections

Welcome to my 30-day public speaking challenge! I'm documenting my journey from nervous novice to (hopefully) confident communicator. This blog will chronicle my daily progress, speech topics, key learnings, and personal reflections. Join me as I tackle the daunting task of improving my public speaking skills, one day at a time.

## Week 1: Facing the Fear

**Day 1:** Introduction Speech

**Day 1:** I started with a basic introduction speech. The goal was simply to stand in front of an audience (friends and family) and speak clearly. Tremendous nerves, but I did it!

**Day 2:** Impromptu - My Favorite Book

**Day 2:** Impromptu speaking is terrifying! I was given the topic "My Favorite Book" with no prep time. I rambled, but it highlighted where I need to improve.

**Day 3:** Overcoming Nervousness Tips

**Day 3:** Today, I researched tips for overcoming nervousness. Deep breathing exercises and visualization seem promising. I will try those tomorrow.

**Day 4:** Speech on a Current Event

**Day 4:** I spoke about a local news story. Focusing on the facts helped me stay grounded and reduce anxiety. Preparation is key!

**Day 5:** Body Language Focus

**Day 5:** Today was all about body language. I watched videos on posture, eye contact, and hand gestures. It's harder than it looks to be natural!

**Day 6:** Why Public Speaking Matters

**Day 6:** I gave a speech on the importance of public speaking in various aspects of life. It helped me realize the value of this skill.

**Day 7:** Week 1 Reflection

**Day 7:** Week 1 down! I'm still incredibly nervous, but I'm also seeing small improvements. I need to focus on slowing down and structuring my thoughts better.

## Week 2: Structure and Storytelling

**Day 8:** Speech Structure Basics

**Day 9:** Tell a personal anecdote.

**Day 10:** The power of pausing.

**Day 11:** Visual Aids - Less is more.

**Day 12:** How to hook the audience.

**Day 13:** Reviewing week 1.

**Day 14:** Week 2 Reflection

**Day 8:** Learning about speech structures (introduction, body, conclusion) has been a game changer. It provides a clear framework for organizing thoughts.

**Day 9:** A personal anecdote was difficult to tell, but the audience was very engaged. Vulnerability can be a strength!

**Day 10:** Pauses are difficult to embrace, but they can really control the tempo of your speech.

**Day 11:** Visual aids are a great prop, but easy to over rely on. Remember to only use them when they add value to the speech.

**Day 12:** Get creative with your intros to draw the audience in. Use rhetorical questions, anecdotes, or stats to do so.

**Day 13:** By reviewing old recordings, I can clearly identify where I struggled, and what I need to improve on.

**Day 14:** I found my voice this week, and I'm looking forward to finding it even more next week.

## Week 3: Voice Modulation and Engagement

**Day 15:** Voice exercises.

**Day 16:** Record yourself speaking and review.

**Day 17:** Use humour in your speeches.

**Day 18:** Engage the audience with questions.

**Day 19:** Cold call questions, or planned.

**Day 20:** Practice different voices!

**Day 21:** Week 3 reflection

**Day 15:** Time to work on my voice and remove my monotone. Use various voice exercises and record them to get feedback.

**Day 16:** Listening to myself speaking makes me cringe but it is a useful exercise for improvements.

**Day 17:** Injecting humour into a speech is a great way to engage an audience. I still need to learn not to rely on it.

**Day 18:** An audience is like a panel of judges, it is important to engage them and ask questions.

**Day 19:** Engaging via cold call questions is not always effective. Make sure it adds to the value of your speech.

**Day 20:** Practice makes perfect, find a list of voices you can easily impersonate and go for it.

**Day 21:** 3 weeks in! I'm excited to see where week 4 brings me. My voice is definitely getting better.

## Week 4: Polish and Performance

**Day 22:** Record and review past speeches.

**Day 23:** Practice in front of a mirror.

**Day 24:** Ask friends/family for feedback.

**Day 25:** Record and review past speeches.

**Day 26:** Go to a live performance.

**Day 27:** Polish your favourite speech.

**Day 28:** Ask friends/family for feedback.

**Day 29:** Final practice.

**Day 30:** Week 4 reflection

**Day 22:** Review past speeches to see how far you've come. You'll be surprised!

**Day 23:** Practicing in front of a mirror is still useful, although you should be looking for a real audience now.

**Day 24:** Feedback from friends and family is great, but unbiased professional feedback is better. Still, take the feedback into consideration.

**Day 25:** Record more speeches and keep improving by making small iterative changes.

**Day 26:** Go watch a performance, take notes on what the performer did well and how they engaged the audience.

**Day 27:** Polish your best speech by rehearsing it and reviewing it. By this stage you should have a solid base.

**Day 28:** Ask more people for feedback and compare to previous feedback you had. See how the changes helped your speech.

**Day 29:** This is the final practice, make sure to get it right.

**Day 30:** My confidence is not what it used to be. I'm a lot more confident than before, and I can see myself doing this again in the future.

## Key Takeaways

- **Preparation is Paramount:** Thorough research and outlining significantly reduce anxiety and improve delivery.
- **Practice Makes Progress:** Consistent practice, even in small increments, leads to noticeable improvements.
- **Feedback is Invaluable:** Constructive criticism from others provides insights you might miss yourself.
- **Embrace Imperfection:** It's okay to make mistakes. Learn from them and keep moving forward.
- **Celebrate Small Wins:** Acknowledge and appreciate your progress along the way to stay motivated.

## Next Steps

I plan to continue honing my public speaking skills by joining a local Toastmasters club and seeking out opportunities to speak in front of different audiences. This 30-day challenge was just the beginning!