

Webster on Public Speaking

Public speaking is a critical aspect of the four language arts and greatly improves written communication. The following presents the four stages of public speaking, as extracted from Dr. Webster's book, *Blended Structure and Style in Composition*.

Dr. Webster's book is available at IEW.com/BSS.

STAGE 1 (GRADES 1–3)

Public speaking can begin as an enrichment activity in grade one and beyond. When several students show competence with Units 1 and 2, selected students can end the class day with a speech and classroom critique. Choose a different student each day to give a speech so that all the students can have as much practice as possible during the year. Homeschooled students may give speeches weekly. In the classroom, begin with some of the best students. Modeling speeches to the weaker students will help the slower ones learn what to do before it is their turn. It also slows the “engine” (the strong students) down a bit to give the slower students time to gain mastery in their writing.

After completing an outline, ask the student to reproduce his outline on a 3" x 5" card. Set up a lectern or music stand and lay down a few rules:

- Speak clearly.
- Grip the lectern with both hands.
- Stand absolutely still. (Instruct fidgety students to stand with feet apart.)
- Look at the cue card, then look at the class and speak the line. Never speak while looking at the cue card.

You may desire to demonstrate for the students first. After a student's speech have a discussion with the class to assess its effectiveness, focusing on the four points:

- Did they speak clearly?
- Did their hands fidget?
- Did they move their feet?
- Did they ever talk to the cue card rather than you?

After a while record or video student speeches. This way they can hear or watch their own speeches for self-evaluation. Interestingly, the best writers do not always make the best speakers, so this process may bring out skills that would otherwise remain dormant.

As your students gain confidence and competence in the first stage of speaking, they may move on to Stage 2. Not all students will progress at the same pace. Be patient to permit them the opportunity to master one stage before moving on.

STAGE 2 (GRADES 1–3)

More advanced public speaking is usually introduced at the end of Unit 3 and into Unit 4. By this time students should have had about six weeks of speech practice. In a classroom, some have spoken many times, others just a few times. Choose the top speakers to learn the new skills. Instead of the teacher choosing, students should choose who is ready to move onto advanced speaking techniques.

In Stage 2, students are taught to move around. First, have them prepare a large cue card with their notes that can be seen from about a yard away. Place the card on the lectern or music stand. Students should be instructed to start a speech at the lectern, then walk to one side of the lectern and speak, walk to the other side and speak, then return to the center to finish. This should be carefully choreographed, and speaking should not happen while walking so that the movement does not interfere with the delivery. Students can check their notes as they pass the lectern. The sequence could be:

- Stand at the lectern and give the title and your name.
- Move about a yard to the right of the lectern and give the first paragraph, speaking diagonally across the audience.
- Walk back to the lectern for the second paragraph.
- Walk about a yard to the left of the lectern for the third paragraph.
- Walk back to the lectern for the final clincher.

When students have mastered moving, add gestures. Just as the movement from the left to the right was carefully choreographed, so should gestures be. Choose one or two gestures that are suitable for the student's paragraph or story. Put a mark on the student's cue card on the word where the gesture should be placed, and have the student practice.

CHAIRMAN'S CUE CARD

I. salutation

1. pleasure to introduce
2. grade four, Parkdale
3. fascinating story

You can also teach students to give an introduction to a speech such as, "Honored guests, ladies and gentlemen, my story today is called 'Ear Muffs for All.'" Other salutations could be, "Teacher, fellow students..." or "Principal, honored guests, teachers and fellow students..." You may also teach a student how to serve as chairman to introduce several speakers. The cue card at right could prompt this kind of speech: "Ladies and gentlemen, fellow students, it is my pleasure to introduce Gordon Haig. Gordon is a grade four student at Parkdale Elementary School. He has a very fascinating story to tell you. Gordon Haig."

Recording students (audio or video) can give students an opportunity to see and hear themselves speak so they can do their own self-assessment. It also can let students see their progress over the year and can be a wonderful thing for their children to watch in the years to come.

STAGE 3 (GRADES 4–6)

In Stage 3, visual aids are added. Since grades 4–6 focus on library research (Unit 6), these visual aids can add to their reports. Students can first give a "source report" explaining how they found material for their report. For example, after looking for information about the planet Mars, a student can bring the books he found and hold them up while describing the process used. The student might report:

I was researching the planet Mars. I first went to the *World Book Encyclopedia* (hold up the encyclopedia volume), and in volume *M I* found the reference on page 293. In the *New Educator Encyclopedia* volume *M-N-O* (hold up the next book), I found it again on page 1945. You have to be careful not to get the planet mixed up with Mars, the Roman god of war. In the subject catalog under *Mars* it said, "See planets." Looking up *planets*, I found the shelf number. There I chose two books: *Exploring the Planets* and *Secrets of Space* (hold up books).

This kind of oral report not only helps other students know how to find material for a report, but also enhances speaking skills.

Visual aids can be further enhanced when students give a speech after completing library research, with the use of a poster or PowerPoint. However, teach students that just as moving around should not distract from the speech, overly detailed or flashy visual aids should not divert attention from the speech, either.

After each speech, conduct a classroom evaluation of both the speech and the use of visual aids. Recording the speeches will again allow students to do self-evaluation.

STAGE 4 (GRADES 7–8)

This stage of public speaking can be a fun class project in which everyone is involved. After writing a research paragraph, students may be chosen to present a speech on *Miss D. Jay's Travel Hour*.

To prepare for this event, students should be writing and presenting research reports to the class. After several have been presented, have the students choose which three peers may present their paragraphs on the show.

For the show, you will need several student helpers:

- The director will have the job of getting people into their places at the right time.
- A music technician will provide and play music appropriate to the event.
- An announcer introduces and ends the program and may make a short announcement in the middle.
- The DJ introduces each individual speaker.
- The speakers have their practiced reports to present.
- A studio audience listens to the program and responds.

For equipment you will need:

- A table with four chairs. The announcer, DJ, music technician, and one speaker will sit at the table. The director stands and moves the speakers in and out of the speaker chair.
- A CD or MP3 player and appropriate music (selected by the music technician)
- A recording device (audio recorder or video camera), if desired. Recording the program permits speakers to listen to the performance and evaluate themselves.
- A sign on the wall with the word "Applause" for the director to point to when the studio audience is to do its part

Below is a possible script for a futuristic program. Classes may choose to set their program at some other point in history or other place in the world. The entire program should be limited to 30 minutes. This can be a great motivational activity, as students will be eager to prepare their reports and show mastery in speaking in order to be chosen for the program.

The same program should be repeated more than once. Begin with 2–3 speakers, and then add one or two to the next show. When a speaker has done the program 2–3 times, he can move off to allow others to move on. Don't be afraid of repetition. Children love it, and it is excellent for obtaining mastery. It also benefits the class, since those who are weak in writing skills may find an area of strength in being an announcer, director, or music technician.

Script Model: Miss D. Jay's Travel Hour

(The music is playing, the music technician already seated wearing headphones. The music technician may change the music for each program. D. Jay and the announcer walk in and take their places at the table. Music down.)

Announcer: Welcome listeners, to Parkdale's radio station, CKOC (Canadian Kids in Oral Communications), and our weekly broadcast of *Miss D. Jay's Travel Hour*. Our visitors today include Gloria Painter, Ben Hyrada, and Chew Wong. (Music up for 20 seconds) Now I bring you Miss D. Jay with another fascinating hour of travel in this year 2185.

D. Jay: Thank you, Ray. Welcome, listeners, to our travel hour. We have a fine studio audience with us today. Can we hear from you? (The director points to the sign "Applause" on the wall. He leads the applause. Music up to cover the noise while the director motions or leads Gloria to her chair before a microphone. When Gloria is seated, the music is lowered.)

Announcer: Miss D. Jay, what do we have on the program for today?

D. Jay: We are going to hear from our visitors on topics about Mars, Jupiter, and Neptune. I would like to introduce Gloria Painter, who was chosen from our class as having the best oral presentation on Mars. Gloria Painter.

Gloria: My topic today is "The Red Planet" and my name is Gloria Painter. (She proceeds to give her speech.)

D. Jay: Thank you, Gloria. That was excellent. I'm sure our audience enjoyed that. (The director points to "Applause." Music up while he sees that Gloria vacates her chair and Ben Hyrada is seated at the broadcast table. When all are settled and silence returns, the music is lowered and off.)

D. Jay: Our next speaker is Ben Hyrada. His speech on Neptune was rated the best in our class. We are happy to have him on the travel hour. Ben Hyrada.

Ben: My topic is "Neptune the Mysterious." My name is Ben Hyrada. (proceeds with his oral presentation)

D. Jay: Thank you, Ben. We enjoyed having you participate. Do come back soon! (Applause and music while Ben vacates the seat and Chew Wong is settled at the microphone. Music down and off.)

Announcer: You are listening to Parkdale CKOC and *Miss D. Jay's Travel Hour*. Welcome back, D. Jay.

D. Jay: Our final speaker is Chew Wong. Chew has an interesting presentation about Jupiter. Chew Wong.

Chew: My topic is "Jupiter: The Super Planet." My name is Chew Wong. (proceeds with his speech)

D. Jay: Thanks, Chew. That was super. (Applause and music while Chew returns. Accommodate as many speakers as are available. Music down.)

D. Jay: That is all for today. See you next week same time, same station. This is D. Jay signing off.

Announcer: You have been listening to *Miss D. Jay's Travel Hour*, produced and directed here in CKOC Parkdale Studios. We wish to thank our music technician, Mike Kotsky, our director, Norman Park, and our studio attendants. Join us next week when Miss D. Jay will bring new visitors to entertain you.

Once the radio or television program is up and running, the opportunity for Unit 7 inventive writing and speaking will abound. Students can write and present commercials for make-believe products appropriate to the genre of the program. These commercials might only be two or three sentences each and can be read by the announcer. It can provide practice for "cold reading" where the announcer does not prepare his speech, but is presented with the list of commercials written by other students to read "cold." Some examples:

Sample Commercials for *The Travel Hour*

The Inter-Planetary Travel Company announces new low fares for a five-day cruise to Mars stopping over at the asteroid, Ceres. The cruise includes a dramatic midnight landing on one of the moons of Mars. Swimming pools, fabulous food, and nightly entertainment on our space ship are included. Phone us. Tickets are going fast.

The Constellation Company has openings in well-paid jobs in its mineral concessions on the moon. Wage rates are out of this world. Join us on the moon. Phone our moon headquarters toll free for information.

Just arrived! Beef produced on Mars in conditions of weightlessness. Meat without muscle. Tender! Contact Martian Meats.

Students may also write news stories to add to the mix, which can combine their Unit 6 research with some Unit 7 creativity. These can also be used for cold reading practice, or have “on-site reporters” read their prepared work. Some examples:

WWIN Inter-Planetary News	
Planet City:	The Council of Mars representing the Japanese Kingdom of Riftoya, the Russian Republic of Rockorsky, and New Canada, welcomed the announcement from Ottawa that it was prepared to finance five asteroidal stations in the asteroid belt. The council chairman pointed out that traffic had increased dangerously in the belt since the opening of the international settlement on Jupiter. After settlement began on Jupiter three years ago, the three Martian powers had contested over who should control it. This almost involved a major inter-planetary war. In the settlement of the dispute, the United Nations was given control of the settlement of Jupiteria. Last week the U.N. declared the whole of Jupiter a U.N. trusteeship. Russia welcomed the declaration. Japan opposed and Canada abstained. The council voted to welcome cautiously the U.N. decision. Martians generally wished to congratulate Canada on its new move to encourage travel to Jupiter.
Jupiteria:	Jupiterians celebrated last night after hearing the announcement of the new asteroidal stations. An unnamed spokesman declared that the asteroid belt had become infested with interplanetary hijackers. Too many Jupiterians had disappeared or been held for ransom in the belt. Safe passage would allow unlimited expansion in the exploitation of the vast gaseous resources of Jupiter.

CONCLUSION

These suggestions are not the end-all to public speaking options, but can provide ideas that inspire you to include speaking opportunities in your classes. The time used to include speaking opportunities will reap great rewards in thinking and writing skills. Many colleges require oral reports in every class, so practicing speeches early in life will prepare students well for later years. Do not neglect public speaking!