

Effective Rehearsal

Brief: Rehearsals provide opportunities to practice a complete speech, apply knowledge, and see what works.

Learning Objective: Demonstrate how to effectively rehearse a public speech.

Key Terms:

- **Rehearsal:** The practicing of something which is to be performed before an audience, usually to test or improve the interaction between several participating people, or to allow technical adjustments with respect to staging.
- **Simulate:** To model, replicate, duplicate the behavior, appearance, or properties of.

Why Rehearse?

Congratulations! By the time you've reached the moment to rehearse your speech, you've already accomplished many tasks. You've selected a great topic, written your specific goals and thesis, and conducted research. You've chosen your main points, decided on the best sub-points, arranged them all into a recognizable form of organization, and developed your outline. Now, you're ready to begin practicing your speech.

Rehearsal is defined as the practicing of something which is to be performed before an audience, usually to test or improve the interaction between several participating people, or to allow technical adjustments with respect to staging. Through rehearsal, you will have the opportunity to assess what works and what doesn't work.

All Performers Rehearse

If you've ever prepared to perform in a school play or perhaps with a band or singing group (or you've seen others prepare to perform on TV or in a movie), you know the importance of rehearsals. All dedicated performers rehearse.

During rehearsal you simulate the real speaking experience as if it's actually happening so you can anticipate what to expect.



Elements of an Effective Rehearsal

Timing

You should consider the basics of timing—the amount of time it takes to deliver the speech, how to time your use of visual aids, such as Power Point or other digital slides for presentations, and your rate of delivery.

Timing is not only about knowing how long you are going to speak, but also about how fast to speak, when to pause, and how long to pause to achieve the desired effect. You can vary your rate of speaking and your use of pausing to achieve different vocal effects as you practice.

Context

Ideally you want to rehearse in the same space using the same equipment you will use for your presentation. If you rehearse in the same space, you will learn to appreciate the special features of the room and the layout. If you are unable to rehearse in the same space, learn as much as you can about that space and do the best you can to replicate those conditions in your rehearsal space.

If you are using technology during your speech, it is very important to rehearse using that technology in the space where you will be performing. If you're unable to practice in your performance space, be sure to replicate that technology in your rehearsal space. On delivery day, be sure to arrive early to test the equipment. If you're using digital slides, save your slides to a flash drive, email them to yourself as an attachment, and save them in the cloud. Whenever possible, have a back-up plan.

Rehearsal Tips

Here are some tips for an effective rehearsal:

- Time the individual parts and the total speech with a stopwatch and make sure to have a clock that you can see while speaking.
- Rehearse with your graphics and coordinate them to your talk. Display them only when you are talking about them.
- Make sure you record and listen to your speech after rehearsal and get feedback from classmates or friends.
- During your final rehearsal, make brief notes for yourself so you know how long each point in the speech takes. Then mark your outline accordingly to be sure you won't spend too much time on any given point during delivery.

From Concept to Action

Before you rehearse, you need to prepare for your rehearsal. Find out if you will have the opportunity to practice in the same space in which you will be performing. Do you need to ask for permission? Be sure to do that far ahead of time. If you are able to practice in the same space, are there time restrictions? Be sure to verify a scheduled time for your rehearsal. Next, consider the physical elements of the space. Will you be using a podium? Will one be provided for you? If you are unable to rehearse in the same space, can you replicate a podium for rehearsal (for example, stack boxes on a table)? And, finally, consider your visual aids. Are you using digital slides, physical visual aids (such as posters or objects), or both? Before you rehearse, be sure to have what you need to include these in your practice delivery, as you won't be able to time your speech appropriately if you omit these elements.

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"Chorus Stage Music Musical Performance Singer." Pixabay. <https://pixabay.com/photos/chorus-stage-music-musical-515897/>. Accessed 27 May 2019. [CC0]

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