Public Speaking & TED-Style Classroom Practice Guide

80 public-speaking practices

I. Becoming comfortable speaking

1. Private baseline recording. Record an unrehearsed talk about something familiar. Preserve it for comparison; do not grade it.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Record one private, one-take 45–60-second answer to "Teach me something you know well." Watch once and note one strength and one next target, each tied to an exact moment.
SUCCESS CHECK The recording is complete, and both notes describe something observable rather than "good," "bad," or "nervous."

2. Creating a trustworthy audience. Establish rules for attentive listening, respectful disagreement, confidentiality, and useful criticism.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Co-write five rules: listen to the end; no mocking; disagree with ideas, not people; describe before advising; ask permission before retelling a personal story. Sort sample responses into "keeps trust" or "breaks trust," then repair one that breaks it.
SUCCESS CHECK Each student gives one specific feedback sentence that follows all five rules.

3. Listening actively. Summarize another person's meaning accurately before responding.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE In pairs, one student speaks for 45 seconds without interruption. The listener says, "Your main point was , and one detail was ." The speaker confirms or corrects it; the listener repeats the corrected version. Switch roles.
SUCCESS CHECK The speaker confirms that the final summary contains the correct main point and one accurate detail.

4. Speaking to one person. Explain something informally to a partner without notes.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Explain for 45 seconds why a familiar game, place, book, or hobby matters, using only three cue words. The listener raises a "clarify" card once; rephrase or add an example without restarting.
SUCCESS CHECK The speaker responds without reading, and the listener can state the clarified point afterward.

5. Introducing someone else. Interview a partner, select the essential information, and introduce them accurately.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Ask: "I care about…," "I can teach people…," and "Something people may not guess about me…." Select two details, verify them with the partner, and give a 30-second introduction.
SUCCESS CHECK The introduction includes the name, two approved details, and why the audience should be interested; the partner confirms every fact.

6. Expressing one clear thought. State one idea in a complete sentence without qualification, repetition, or unnecessary background.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Answer "One small thing I would change is…" for 30 seconds. Compress the answer into one 12–18-word sentence and deliver only that sentence. Three listeners privately write its subject and claim.
SUCCESS CHECK At least two listeners identify the subject and claim the speaker intended.

7. Show and explain. Present a familiar object, image, skill, or interest so attention can stay on communication.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Give a 60-second talk using a familiar object, photo, or simple skill. Show what it is, demonstrate or explain how it works, and say why it matters to you.
SUCCESS CHECK A listener can state what it is, how it works, and why the speaker chose it.

II. Controlling the speaking instrument

8. Grounding and posture. Use a balanced stance, physical stillness, and purposeful movement.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Choose a stable standing or seated position. Deliver three connected lines twice: first without changing position, then with one deliberate movement at an idea transition. A partner identifies what the movement marked.
SUCCESS CHECK The speaker begins and ends from a stable base; any movement matches a change in meaning. Stillness may be the best choice.

9. Breathing. Use relaxed breathing and complete thoughts without vocal strain.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Take three easy, unforced breaths. Mark natural breath points in two sentences, then speak each complete thought on a comfortable exhale without squeezing the final words.
SUCCESS CHECK The listener hears every phrase ending, and the speaker does not gasp or breathe inside a marked thought.

10. Volume and projection. Reach the back of the room clearly without shouting.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Place listeners at the front, middle, and back. Each signals "soft," "clear," or "too loud" after one line. Adjust and repeat until the voice reaches the back comfortably.
SUCCESS CHECK All three listeners signal "clear" on two consecutive lines, and the back listener repeats the line accurately.

11. Articulation. Make consonants, vowels, pronunciation, and sentence endings intelligible.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Choose a 12-word sentence and underline three essential words. A partner who cannot see it writes what they hear. Practise only unclear sounds or words, then repeat at a natural pace.
SUCCESS CHECK The listener records all three essential words on the second attempt. Accent differences are not errors when words are intelligible.

12. Pacing. Vary speed according to meaning instead of rushing, dragging, or using one rhythm.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Mark one part of a short paragraph to quicken slightly and one key sentence to slow down. Deliver it once uniformly and once with the changes. The listener names the emphasized idea.
SUCCESS CHECK The listener hears both speed changes and identifies the intended key idea.

13. Pausing. Replace filler words with silence and use pauses to separate, emphasize, or reveal ideas.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Mark two short thought-boundary pauses and one longer emphasis pause in a four-sentence talk. A partner moves one counter for each filler; substitute silence and try again.
SUCCESS CHECK All three planned pauses are audible, and the second delivery has no more than one unplanned filler.

14. Eye contact. Complete thoughts toward individual listeners instead of scanning mechanically.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Three listeners in different places hold colored cards. Deliver one complete thought toward each, shifting attention only during a pause. Direct gaze, near-face gaze, or another agreed face-level target all count.
SUCCESS CHECK Each listener receives one complete thought, and the speaker does not scan away mid-sentence.

15. Gesture and expression. Use hands, face, and movement to clarify meaning rather than decorate performance.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Prepare three lines showing size or shape, direction or sequence, and feeling or contrast. Add one deliberate cue to each. Partners infer each cue's meaning; revise any unclear cue.
SUCCESS CHECK Partners infer at least two intended meanings, and every cue occurs with the words it clarifies.

16. Delivery milestone. Combine posture, breath, projection, articulation, pacing, pauses, audience connection, and meaningful gesture.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Give a 75–90-second familiar-topic talk. Assign each observer one delivery skill. After specific feedback, choose one vocal and one physical change and repeat the final 30 seconds.
SUCCESS CHECK The first delivery shows at least six of eight skills, and both chosen targets improve in the repeat.

III. Constructing a speech

17. Audience. Determine what listeners know, misunderstand, value, resist, and need explained.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — AUDIENCE MAP, PAIRS, 8 MIN Fill four boxes for one audience: already knows, may misunderstand, cares about, needs explained. Give a 30-second preview; the partner role-plays a listener and paraphrases it. Revise flagged assumptions or terms.
SUCCESS CHECK The partner states both the main point and why it matters to that audience.

18. Purpose. Choose whether the talk will explain, demonstrate, entertain, commemorate, persuade, or provoke inquiry.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — PURPOSE SWITCH, GROUPS OF FOUR, 10 MIN Everyone receives the same topic but draws a different purpose. Write "After this talk, listeners will…" and give a 30-second opening without naming the purpose. Peers identify the purpose and intended change.
SUCCESS CHECK At least two of three listeners identify both correctly.

19. Topic versus idea. Convert a broad subject into a specific, supportable point.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — TOPIC-TO-IDEA SORT, 8 MIN Sort eight prepared cards into topic or idea. Convert one broad topic into three sentences beginning, "My audience should understand that…," then choose the strongest.
SUCCESS CHECK The chosen sentence can be supported, questioned, or challenged; it is not merely a category.

20. The through-line. Express the talk's central movement in one sentence; make every part serve it.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — RED-THREAD TEST, PAIRS, 10 MIN Write the through-line, then put each planned fact, example, or story on a card. A partner asks how each card moves the line forward. Keep, revise, or remove it.
SUCCESS CHECK A listener's one-sentence takeaway matches the through-line, and every retained card has a stated job.

21. Limiting the material. Keep what the audience needs and remove material that does not advance the talk.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — NINETY-TO-FORTY-FIVE CUT, 10 MIN Give a 90-second explanation, then cut it to 45 seconds while preserving the central idea and strongest support. Put removed material in a "later or Q&A" pile.
SUCCESS CHECK The revision meets time; a new listener gives the same takeaway and strongest reason.

22. Basic architecture. Build a beginning that creates attention, a middle that develops meaning, and an ending that completes the movement.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — HUMAN OUTLINE, GROUPS, 12 MIN Arrange seven scrambled sentences from a miniature talk into opening, development, and conclusion; justify the order. Build an original five-card talk with the same architecture.
SUCCESS CHECK A listener marks all three parts and explains why the order makes sense.

23. Openings. Open through a question, image, problem, contradiction, scene, demonstration, or striking claim.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — HOOK LABORATORY, 12 MIN Prepare three 20-second openings for one talk: a scene or image, a question or contradiction, and a demonstration or claim. Listeners score curiosity and relevance separately.
SUCCESS CHECK The selected opening earns both scores from most listeners and reaches the central idea within 20 seconds.

24. Conclusions. End through synthesis, return, implication, challenge, resolution, or a transformed opening.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — LAST-LINE WORKSHOP, 10 MIN Draft and deliver three endings: a synthesis, a return to the opening, and an implication or challenge. Listeners write the takeaway after each.
SUCCESS CHECK The chosen ending produces the intended takeaway, feels complete, and adds no new evidence.

25. Transitions. Make relationships audible through signposting, callbacks, questions, contrast, and logical movement.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — AUDIBLE BRIDGES, PAIRS, 8 MIN Put three main-point cards in order. Between them add cards naming the relationship—cause, contrast, sequence, problem-solution, or example. Deliver without showing them; the listener draws the relationships heard.
SUCCESS CHECK The listener reconstructs both connections from the spoken transitions alone.

26. Speaking notes. Convert prose into a keyword outline and speak from prepared thought without reading a manuscript.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — NOTES COMPRESSION LADDER, 10 MIN Reduce a 120-word paragraph to phrases, then to a six-line keyword card with no complete sentences. Add only essential cues such as source, pause, or show visual, then deliver.
SUCCESS CHECK All required ideas remain, and the speaker finishes thoughts while looking at listeners.

27. Extemporaneous delivery. Preserve structure and meaning while changing the wording.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — SAME MAP, NEW WORDS, THREE ROUNDS Give the same 45-second talk to three partners from one four-card outline. Change wording and examples while keeping claim and sequence stable. Each listener records the structure.
SUCCESS CHECK All three listeners recover the same claim and sequence despite different phrasing.

28. Rehearsal literacy. Improve one chosen feature per run instead of merely repeating the talk.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — ONE-VARIABLE REHEARSAL, THREE TAKES Record a baseline. Choose one observable target: a transition, filler count, explanation length, or final line. Rehearse twice more while peers measure only that target.
SUCCESS CHECK The final measure improves over baseline while the meaning stays stable.

IV. Explaining and informing

29. Clear explanation. Define unfamiliar terms, begin from shared knowledge, and introduce complexity gradually.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — DRAW-AND-TEACH-BACK, PAIRS, 12 MIN Explain an unfamiliar process for one minute. The listener draws its parts or sequence, then teaches it back. Mark the first breakdown and revise that section.
SUCCESS CHECK After revision, the listener reconstructs the process without relying on unexplained terms.

30. Examples and analogies. Use concrete cases to illuminate an idea, then show where the analogy stops working.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — ANALOGY BOUNDARY MAP, 10 MIN Explain one concept with an example and analogy. Complete "These are alike because…" with two connections and "The analogy breaks when…" with one limit. A partner tests a new case.
SUCCESS CHECK The listener explains both the concept and the analogy's boundary without a false conclusion.

31. Research questions. Turn the speech idea into questions that determine what evidence must be found.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — QUESTION FUNNEL, 12 MIN Generate questions using how, why, compared with, under what conditions, and with what consequence. Score clarity, focus, complexity, and answerability; choose one and list the needed evidence.
SUCCESS CHECK The question fits the talk length, needs more than a yes/no or simple fact, and requires more than one source.

32. Source judgment. Evaluate authorship, expertise, evidence, method, date, context, disagreement, and possible distortion.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — SOURCE FACE-OFF, GROUPS, 15 MIN Compare three sources making one claim. Investigate who created each and what independent sources say about that creator; inspect method, evidence, date, purpose, and disagreements. Rank them for a stated use.
SUCCESS CHECK The ranking cites independent authority, evidence or method, currency, and purpose—not appearance or domain name.

33. Evidence selection. Choose evidence that actually supports the claim, not evidence that merely sounds impressive.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — EVIDENCE AUDITION, GROUPS, 10 MIN Examine six mixed-quality evidence cards. Select the best two and complete: "This supports the claim because…" and "This does not establish…".
SUCCESS CHECK Each selection directly supports the claim and is not asked to prove more than its data or method permits.

34. Spoken attribution. Identify sources naturally so listeners understand the evidence and its origin.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — CITATION EAR TEST, PAIRS, 10 MIN Turn three written citations into conversational introductions naming who produced the information, why they are qualified, the source type, and date. Say each before its evidence; the listener records what was heard.
SUCCESS CHECK The listener identifies the source, relevant credibility, and currency without hearing a URL.

35. Reasoning. Connect evidence to conclusions explicitly through causal reasoning, comparison, classification, induction, or deduction.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — CLAIM-EVIDENCE-WARRANT BRIDGE, PAIRS, 12 MIN Put a claim and evidence on separate cards. Explain the link in one because sentence. The partner offers a counterexample; strengthen the warrant or qualify the claim.
SUCCESS CHECK A listener states the connection, and the inference survives the counterexample or is responsibly narrowed.

36. Fallacies and causal reversal. Find unsupported leaps, false choices, circular claims, weak analogies, cherry-picking, and confused cause and effect.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — FALLACY REPAIR STATIONS, 15 MIN Rotate through five short faulty arguments. Underline each logical leap and repair it by adding alternatives, evidence, or qualification.
SUCCESS CHECK The group repairs at least four, and the next group explains why each original leap is gone.

37. Explaining numbers. Translate statistics into comprehensible scale, comparisons, proportions, and consequences.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — THREE TRANSLATIONS, PAIRS, 12 MIN Express one real statistic as a frequency with a clear denominator, a fair comparison or scale, and a practical consequence. Partners check arithmetic, denominator, timeframe, and context.
SUCCESS CHECK The translation stays accurate, and the listener repeats both the quantity and why it matters.

38. Visual communication. Use an image, object, quotation, diagram, or minimal slide only when it improves understanding.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — VISUAL A/B TEST, GROUPS, 15 MIN Explain one difficult point to half the group without a visual and half with one image, object, or diagram. Ask the same comprehension question; keep, revise, or remove the visual from the results.
SUCCESS CHECK The visual preserves or improves comprehension without duplicating the speech in text; it is described aloud.

39. Informative-talk milestone. Deliver a researched explanation that an unfamiliar audience can understand, question, and independently verify.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — COLD-AUDIENCE TEST Give a three-minute explanation plus two minutes of questions to classmates who have not seen the draft. Each submits the central idea, key relationship, one findable source, and one remaining question.
SUCCESS CHECK Three-quarters capture the idea and explanation, one spoken source is findable, and the speaker makes one evidence-based revision.

V. Storytelling

40. Story anatomy. Build stories from situation, character, desire, obstacle, choice, consequence, and change.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — SEVEN-CARD CAUSAL CHAIN Fill one card for each element, arrange them, and tell the story in 75 seconds. A partner removes any card that does not affect the next one; repair the causal link.
SUCCESS CHECK The listener names the desire, obstacle, choice, consequence, and change; the consequence follows from the choice.

41. Scene versus summary. Slow down for decisive moments and compress background that does not deserve equal attention.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — ZOOM DIAL Tell one event using 15-second summaries for the lead-up and aftermath, with a 30–45-second moment-by-moment scene for the turning point. Use action or brief dialogue only in the scene.
SUCCESS CHECK A listener identifies the scene's boundaries and why that moment received the most time.

42. Concrete detail. Select details that establish place, character, tension, or meaning without clutter.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — DETAILS WITH JOBS Tell a 45-second moment using exactly three details: one for place, one for character, and one for tension or meaning. Listeners state what each made them infer; replace details that did no work.
SUCCESS CHECK Two listeners independently infer the intended job of every retained detail.

43. Narrative movement. Control what the audience knows, when they know it, and why it matters.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — INFORMATION-RELEASE LADDER Put five story facts on cards. Arrange them so an early clue creates a question and a later reveal completes or changes understanding. Tell it, collect listeners' question-and-reveal points, and revise once.
SUCCESS CHECK Listeners form the intended question, remain oriented, and can explain the payoff.

44. The story-idea relationship. Make the story demonstrate, complicate, or transform the idea; an anecdote alone does not prove a general claim.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — STORY-TO-CLAIM BRIDGE After a 60-second story, listeners write one conclusion it supports and one broader conclusion it cannot prove. Narrow the idea sentence and name evidence needed for any broader claim.
SUCCESS CHECK Two listeners explain the same link, and the final claim is no broader than the story supports.

45. Narrative ethics. Do not invent details, exploit another person's experience, or present memory as unquestionable evidence.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — CONSENT, ACCURACY, PRIVACY AUDIT Label details in a provided sample as verified, uncertain, or belonging to someone else. Apply the same checks to an optional personal story; verify, qualify, anonymize, obtain permission, or remove each flagged detail. No personal story is required.
SUCCESS CHECK Uncertain memories are labelled; nothing is knowingly invented; identifiable third-party details have permission or are removed.

46. Story-talk milestone. Tell a complete story whose significance becomes clear without a forced moral.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — SILENT-SIGNIFICANCE SHOWCASE Deliver a two-minute story without saying "the lesson is" or "the moral is." Listeners complete "This mattered because…". Revise one story beat if responses miss the intended significance.
SUCCESS CHECK Most listeners identify compatible significance and name the moment of change.

VI. Persuasion and argument

47. Types of claims. Distinguish claims of fact, cause, value, interpretation, definition, and policy.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — CLAIM TRANSFORMATION LAB Turn one neutral topic into six spoken claims, one of each type. A partner classifies them without labels; then state what evidence each requires.
SUCCESS CHECK The partner classifies at least five, and each version makes a genuinely different assertion.

48. Audience values. Identify principles beneath a position instead of treating disagreement as ignorance.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — VALUE-LADDER INTERVIEW Present a low-stakes proposal. A partner asks "Why does that matter?" twice, paraphrases the underlying value, and receives confirmation or correction. Restate the proposal to connect honestly with that value; swap roles.
SUCCESS CHECK The value paraphrase is confirmed, and the revision neither stereotypes nor pretends agreement.

49. Rhetorical appeals. Coordinate credibility, emotion, reasoning, timing, and style without letting one substitute for another.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — THREE-LEG APPEAL Deliver a 75-second case with one relevant credibility cue, one concrete human consequence, and one evidence-to-claim link. Listeners mark each and flag any point supported only by emotion or authority.
SUCCESS CHECK All three are identifiable, and the argument remains supported without the emotional and credibility cues.

50. Strong objections. Find the best objection even when the audience does not raise it.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — OBJECTION TRIAGE After a one-minute argument, peers submit objections to its premise, evidence, feasibility, or consequences. Rank them by how seriously each weakens the conclusion, then answer the strongest.
SUCCESS CHECK The speaker addresses a consequential objection with evidence or narrows the claim instead of choosing an easier criticism.

51. Steel-manning. Present an opposing position in terms its strongest advocate could accept before answering it.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — OPPONENT-APPROVAL PROTOCOL From an assigned source—not a classmate's belief—state its conclusion, strongest reason, and supporting evidence or value. A student assigned to defend the source must approve the account before rebuttal.
SUCCESS CHECK The approved account has no loaded wording or missing central reason; the rebuttal addresses that version.

52. Qualification. State where a claim applies, where it does not, what remains uncertain, and what evidence could change it.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — BOUNDARY MAP Complete four boxes: applies, does not apply, unknown, and evidence that would change my mind. Deliver the qualified claim in 45 seconds.
SUCCESS CHECK The statement includes a boundary, uncertainty, and evidence-based update; listeners sort provided examples inside or outside its scope.

53. Persuasive architecture. Establish the problem, importance, causes, response, alternatives, and consequences.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — SIX-LINK ARGUMENT Build six cards: problem → importance → cause → response → alternative tested → consequences. Deliver a two-minute version while listeners reconstruct the chain.
SUCCESS CHECK The response addresses a named cause, and a listener rebuilds all six links in order.

54. Calls to action. Ask for a specific action proportionate to the evidence instead of vague inspiration.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — ACTION-LADDER TEST Replace a vague request with who should do what, by when, and the first step or resource. Listeners try to begin it through a 60-second role-play and report missing information.
SUCCESS CHECK A listener begins without a follow-up question, and the commitment is feasible and proportionate.

55. Persuasive-talk milestone. Deliver a defensible argument and answer substantive objections without evasion.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — PERSUASION HEARING Give a three-minute talk, then answer a peer jury's strongest question in 45 seconds. Jurors record the claim, best evidence, qualification, and requested action before their verdict.
SUCCESS CHECK Records match the intention; the answer addresses the objection or openly concedes and narrows the claim.

56. Structured debate. Defend, question, respond under pressure, and revise when the opposing case reveals a real weakness.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE — SWITCH-SIDE CONTROVERSY Pairs use a common evidence pack to present assigned sides, cross-examine, switch sides, and present the strongest opposing case. Each states what changed, was qualified, or remains uncertain.
SUCCESS CHECK Each summary is accepted by the opposing pair, answers use evidence, and the reflection names a genuine revision.

VII. Advanced speaking

57. Impromptu speaking. Rapidly create a claim, reason, example, and conclusion without pretending an improvised answer is exhaustive.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Draw a familiar prompt. Take 30 seconds to write four cues—claim, reason, example, close—then speak for 60 seconds. End with a scope sentence such as "That is one reason, not the whole story."
SUCCESS CHECK Speak for 45–75 seconds; a listener identifies all four parts; the close avoids an unsupported absolute.

58. Question and answer. Hear the complete question, identify its premise, answer directly, and distinguish knowledge from uncertainty.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE In triads, give a 45-second explanation. The questioner asks one clarification and one challenge. Wait, restate each question, answer immediately, support it, and name what remains uncertain. Rotate roles.
SUCCESS CHECK No interruption; the restatement is accepted; the first sentence answers; uncertainty is admitted rather than guessed.

59. Audience adaptation. Present the same idea to different audiences without weakening or changing its meaning.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Give 45-second versions to a younger child, a knowledgeable classmate, and a skeptic. Each listener writes the central claim and notes changes in vocabulary, example, evidence, or emphasis.
SUCCESS CHECK All record the same claim; at least two choices change for each audience; no facts change.

60. Medium adaptation. Adjust delivery for a room, stage, microphone, camera, interview, podcast, meeting, or online presentation.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Deliver the same 30-second message to the back of the room without a microphone, to a webcam, and as audio only. Partners record which visual and vocal cues work in each.
SUCCESS CHECK The room version is audible, camera gaze is contained and lens-directed, audio replaces unseen cues with words, and meaning stays stable.

61. Humour. Use humour for character, contradiction, recognition, or relief; remove what distracts or targets people.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Prepare a plain 30-second explanation and one with a relevant, harmless humorous observation. Three listeners write the main idea and whether the humour clarified, humanized, or distracted.
SUCCESS CHECK Nobody is the target; recall does not fall; two listeners say humour serves the point. Otherwise remove it.

62. Panels and collaborative speaking. Share attention, connect contributions, disagree productively, and form one presentation.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Run a four-person, four-minute panel with moderator, evidence giver, connector, and challenger. Every contribution must link to something already said before adding a point.
SUCCESS CHECK Everyone contributes; there are two bridges and one respectful disagreement; no one uses over 40% of time; the close synthesizes two voices.

63. Rhetorical analysis. Examine audience, purpose, structure, evidence, narrative, delivery, omissions, and effects.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Watch a two-minute speech twice. On the second viewing, groups use six lenses: audience/purpose, structure, evidence, narrative, delivery, and omission. Every note gets a timestamp or phrase and predicted effect.
SUCCESS CHECK Each lens has specific evidence, and observation is clearly separated from inference.

64. Giving feedback. Describe what happened, where it happened, its effect, and a useful change—not "good" or "bad."
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Watch a peer's 60-second clip twice. Say: "At , I observed . The effect was . Try ." The speaker immediately redelivers the affected 20 seconds.
SUCCESS CHECK The comment names an exact moment, behavior, effect, and feasible action; the change appears in the retry.

65. Coaching another speaker. Clarify the speaker's own intention and voice instead of rewriting them into the coach's style.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE For three minutes, the coach asks only: "What should listeners understand?", "Where is that not happening?", and "What two changes could you try?" The speaker chooses one option and redelivers.
SUCCESS CHECK The speaker creates and chooses the revision, then explains how it serves the original intention.

VIII. The original capstone talk

66. Idea proposal. State the idea, why it matters, what makes it more than a topic, and what should change in the audience's understanding.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Complete four boxes: exact claim, why it matters, surprising tension, and intended audience shift. Pitch to three peers; each writes what the finished talk will argue and change.
SUCCESS CHECK All three paraphrases express the same precise claim and intended shift; if not, narrow and retest.

67. Idea challenge. Test originality, defensibility, focus, audience value, and suitability for spoken presentation.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Move through five reviewer stations: contribution, evidence, scope, audience, and spoken fit. Each asks one set question; revise after all five.
SUCCESS CHECK The final card has a distinct contribution, credible support, boundary, audience consequence, and speakable example or demonstration.

68. Research dossier. Collect primary evidence, strong secondary research, competing views, examples, uncertainties, and full source information.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Build a matrix with one row per central factual claim and columns for direct evidence, independent support, counterevidence, uncertainty, oral attribution, and citation. A partner traces a random claim to its source.
SUCCESS CHECK Every claim is traceable; one competing source and one uncertainty appear; every used source can be summarized accurately.

69. Argument map. Identify the main claim, reasons, evidence, assumptions, objections, qualifications, and implications.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Put each element on colored cards and connect them with labelled arrows. A partner questions or removes one connection at a time.
SUCCESS CHECK No evidence floats; every link forms a because or therefore sentence; the strongest objection is answered or narrows the claim.

70. Narrative map. Decide where story, explanation, argument, humour, demonstration, and visuals belong—and what work each performs.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Put every planned segment on a card. Label its mode and job—humanize, clarify, prove, challenge, show, or transition. Combine or cut cards doing the same job.
SUCCESS CHECK Every card has a distinct function tied to the central idea; a partner explains why each nonverbal or narrative element is necessary.

71. Spoken drafting. Develop the talk aloud before polishing; language written for the eye often sounds unnatural to the ear.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Explain the idea conversationally for two minutes while a partner records it and captures the strongest phrase plus one unclear point. Organize a second version from only six keywords and selected natural phrases.
SUCCESS CHECK The retry is within 10% of time, uses no sentence notes, keeps two natural phrases, and yields the intended takeaway.

72. First complete delivery. Present the whole talk without interruption to expose structural problems isolated drills cannot reveal.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Record one uninterrupted full run. Listeners timestamp the strongest moment, a lost or confusing moment, and repetition. Review the recording and cluster notes without defending the talk.
SUCCESS CHECK The run finishes within 10% of time, and three high-impact whole-talk problems are supported by timestamps or repeated notes.

73. Content surgery. Remove repetition, unnecessary history, unsupported claims, ornamental quotations, weak jokes, and competition with the through-line.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Mark an outline or transcript for repetition, backstory, unsupported material, and ornament. Cut at least 15% of running time, then present to a new listener.
SUCCESS CHECK The listener still states the central idea and two supports; the talk fits time; every surviving section has a unique job.

74. Focused rehearsal. Practise structure, voice, movement, visuals, transitions, difficult passages, and conclusion separately before recombining them.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Select three weaknesses. Rehearse each 20–40-second passage three times while changing only one variable. Set a countable target before each set.
SUCCESS CHECK Each target is defined before practice and met on two consecutive attempts before recombination.

75. Adversarial rehearsal. Invite listeners to find ambiguity, missing evidence, counterexamples, and unearned conclusions.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Assign four constructive red-team roles: ambiguity hunter, evidence auditor, counterexample finder, and fair skeptic. Listen silently, sort each challenge as answer, research, revise, or irrelevant, then respond in round two.
SUCCESS CHECK Two material challenges produce stronger evidence, qualification, or a narrower claim; the strongest objection gets a direct answer.

76. Audience rehearsal. Test what the intended audience actually understands, not what the speaker meant to convey.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Present to four people approximating the audience's age, knowledge, or attitude. Before discussion, each writes the main idea, one remembered support, and one confusion. Sort for patterns.
SUCCESS CHECK Three of four state the intended idea and support; no critical misunderstanding appears on more than one card.

77. Technical rehearsal. Test space, microphone, camera, slides, objects, entrances, exits, recording, and the contingency plan.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Run the full talk in the real or simulated venue. Test every file, connection, prop, cue, entrance, and exit. On a second run, the teacher triggers one announced failure type.
SUCCESS CHECK The message stays understandable and on time; the failed element is restored or replaced within 20 seconds.

78. Final public talk. Deliver a polished original talk followed by genuine audience questions.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Present to a real audience and take unscripted questions. Before leaving, listeners submit the central idea, strongest support, and one question or consequence.
SUCCESS CHECK Time is met; three of four sampled slips state the idea accurately; answers are direct or uncertainty is stated honestly.

79. Self-evaluation. Compare the final talk with the baseline and identify concrete changes in thought, construction, delivery, and responsiveness.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Watch matched baseline and final sections. Make a two-column table with timestamped evidence for changes in thinking, structure, delivery, and responsiveness. Name one remaining weakness and next goal.
SUCCESS CHECK Four comparisons cite both recordings, and the next goal is measurable.

80. Final revision. Revise after public testing and deliver a stronger second version answerable to evidence, criticism, and experience.
CLASSROOM EXERCISE Make a three-column change log: audience or reviewer evidence, chosen revision, intended effect. Deliver the complete revision to a small audience using the same recall test and time limit.
SUCCESS CHECK Every change traces to evidence; one failed measure improves; previous successes hold; no new unsupported claim or timing problem appears.

Child-speaker models and practice tasks

Start with: Elizabeth Richards → Rain Williams → Cole Blakeway → Grace Wang → Muchen Yan → Janelle Lin

TALK-01 — Elizabeth Richards, age 8: Girls Deserve to Play All Sports
PRACTICE Give a 60–90-second fairness argument about a sport or rule you know. State the rule, who it affects, and the change you want.
https://www.ted.com/talks/girls_deserve_to_play_all_sports

TALK-02 — Rain Williams, age 10: Ableism and Invisible Disabilities in Schools
PRACTICE Turn one school experience into a claim aimed at adults. Explain what happened, why it matters, and what should change.
https://www.ted.com/talks/rain_williams_ableism_and_invisible_disabilities_in_schools

TALK-03 — Cole Blakeway, age 10: Why We Should Choose Our Partner
PRACTICE Tell a friendship story with one scene, one turning point, and one larger idea.
https://www.ted.com/talks/cole_blakeway_why_we_should_choose_our_partner

TALK-04 — Grace Wang, age 7: Go Green by Growing Your Greens
PRACTICE Show a familiar object or tool while explaining what it does, how it works, and why it matters.
https://www.ted.com/talks/grace_wang_go_green_by_growing_your_greens

TALK-05 — Muchen Yan, age 10: Video Games Are Not What Parents Think
PRACTICE Defend an opinion adults may dispute. Give two reasons, one example, and an answer to the strongest objection.
https://www.ted.com/talks/muchen_yan_video_games_are_not_what_parents_think

TALK-06 — Janelle Lin, age 6: Let's Go Outside and Play
PRACTICE Recommend an everyday activity. Give three concrete benefits and one clear call to action.
https://www.ted.com/talks/let_s_go_outside_and_play

TALK-07 — Anvi Vishesh Agrawal, age 5: Creativity Is a Child's Superpower
PRACTICE Give a one-minute talk built around one sentence: "Creativity is ___." Demonstrate it with one example.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmONJO7Em8Q

TALK-08 — Luella Zhang, age 8: Save a Tree, Save a Life
PRACTICE Explain a problem, demonstrate a practical solution, and end with one action children can take.
https://www.ted.com/talks/luella_zhang_save_a_tree_save_a_life

TALK-09 — Bandi Guan, age 8: Climate Change: From One Kid to Another
PRACTICE Explain one part of a large issue to children using one analogy and one concrete example.
https://www.ted.com/talks/bandi_guan_climate_change_from_one_kid_to_another

TALK-10 — Luke Bakic, age 9: The Power and Importance of Reading
PRACTICE Turn a personal interest into a claim about why it matters to other people.
https://www.ted.com/talks/luke_bakic_the_power_and_importance_of_reading

TALK-11 — Summer Freeman, age 10: Let's Dance
PRACTICE Tell a story of fear and change using a scene, obstacle, choice, and result.
https://www.ted.com/talks/summer_freeman_let_s_dance

TALK-12 — Shanna Moe, age 11: Why You Should Look for Street Diamonds
PRACTICE Build a speech from one small neighbourhood observation and show how it leads to a larger idea.
https://www.ted.com/talks/shanna_moe_why_you_should_look_for_street_diamonds

TALK-13 — Zymal Umar, age 11: One Small Action Can Change the World
PRACTICE Move from a noticed problem to action. Show what you made or did, what happened, and what others can do.
https://www.ted.com/talks/zymal_umar_one_small_action_can_change_the_world

TALK-14 — Jordan Reeves, age 11: You're Different? Speak Up!
PRACTICE Use personal experience to argue for inclusion. State what the story supports and what action should follow.
https://www.ted.com/talks/jordan_reeves_you_re_different_speak_up

TALK-15 — Molly Wright, age 7: How Every Child Can Thrive by Five
PRACTICE Open with a question, present research, demonstrate the idea, and conclude with one specific implication.
https://www.ted.com/talks/molly_wright_how_every_child_can_thrive_by_five

TALK-16 — Adam El Rafey, age 8: Never Underestimate an 8 Year Old!
PRACTICE Use humour and rapid questions to challenge one school practice, then state the serious claim underneath.
https://www.ted.com/talks/adam_el_rafey_never_underestimate_an_8_year_old

TALK-17 — Birke Baehr, age 11: What's Wrong with Our Food System?
PRACTICE Give a compact research-based argument with a claim, evidence, spoken source attribution, and call to action.
https://www.ted.com/talks/birke_baehr_what_s_wrong_with_our_food_system

Choose the educator

• Substantial classroom teaching plus live speaking, performance, debate, theatre, communications, storytelling, or speechwriting experience.

• Can teach idea development, structure, argument, narrative, research, openings, transitions, and conclusions.

• Can coach voice, pace, posture, gesture, eye contact, movement, and stage presence without standardizing personality.

• Uses a trustworthy audience culture: attentive listening, respectful disagreement, privacy, and useful criticism.

• Gives individual feedback as observable behaviour → audience effect → specific next action.

• Uses short practice, recording when useful, playback, repeated delivery, and revision—not one high-stakes performance.

• Teaches source evaluation, reasoning, responsible factual claims, and honest uncertainty.

• Can show concrete student improvement and teach a practical sample lesson before hiring.

• Includes a live or recorded final showcase followed by real questions and a revision.

• Reject charisma-only coaching, motivational-speaking substitutes, TED mannerism imitation, and confidence work that neglects ideas, evidence, or revision.

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