



# Anti-Stage-Fright Checklist

Are you one of these people who gets shaky all over just thinking about giving a speech? Guess what: You're not alone. Famous speakers throughout history faced the same kind of fear you're feeling—and they survived.

To help you survive your speeches, refer to this handy checklist before every presentation. Used properly, it will dramatically reduce your stage fright—and help you put whatever fear is left to good use. Good luck!

- 
- Be prepared!** The more ready you are, the less nervous you'll be. So practice, practice, until your speech becomes an old friend.
  - The only way to improve as a speaker is by speaking.** Everytime you give a speech, you hear something and you improve. A good attitude to take with you to the front of the room might be, "I may be a little nervous—but getting up here and doing my best is the only way I can get better."
  - It's not as bad as you think:** According to the experts, what seems like very obvious stage fright to you is largely unnoticeable to your audience. Even symptoms that appear major to you are practically invisible to listeners, minor symptoms are invisible.
  - The audience wants you to succeed.** Your classmates all know what you're going through, and they stand to gain from hearing what you have to say.
  - Talk to yourself:** Research shows that positive self-talk (as in, "I'll do great!" and "I'm going to give the best speech of my life!") has a definite effect on performance. In other words, it works—so try it!
  - Relax!** Try telling yourself to calm down, or closing your eyes and taking a few deep, even breaths. Thinking about calm places—such as the beach or a mountaintop—can go a long way toward reducing uneasiness, too.
  - See it, then be it.** Athletes often use visualization to sharpen their game. You can use it to become a better speaker. Here's how: Visualize, or imagine, yourself giving a great speech. In your mind, see the interested faces of the audience members. Hear your voice, powerful and confident. Imagine the applause at the end of your presentation.
  - If you're still nervous after all this...good!** The world's top speakers all know how useful nervousness can be. The trick is to use your stage fright like fuel; harness its power to make your presentation more energetic, more exciting, and more vital. With practice, you can convert fear from a dreaded enemy to a valued friend.
-