

- b. BAD. “Anna had just arrived from Russia when she was arrested by police, who accused her of spying. She was put in a cell for two months and was not able to see anyone. Can we let this happen in the United States?”
- c. BAD. “In a recent issue of *The New Republic*, a story appeared about a girl. . . .”

Discussion: We are constantly challenged to judge when a style has “substance” and when it is just “superficial.” In terms of our judgments of self, the former is associated with reflections of “character” (like the unique habits of a superstar athlete) and the latter is indicative of mere “fashion” (like that athlete’s name-brand merchandise). How do you distinguish between substantial and superficial style? When do you think our style choices not just show something significant about ourselves and our character, but actually form our character?

The Fourth Canon: Memory

The art of memory naturally followed style because once a speech was written, an orator in the Classical age had to memorize it before delivery. **Memory** as the fourth canon refers to the ability to memorize a text and to reproduce it in a manner that seems natural rather than artificial. The canon of memory, in short, is the act of absorbing the content and form of the speech so fully into oneself that the speech feels like an unforced expression of one’s thoughts and feelings. Often neglected, the canon of memory remains one of the most important facets of an effective speech for two reasons. For the speaker, memorizing and therefore internalizing a speech provides the level of confidence we normally feel in our casual conversations with others. One of the reasons we do not feel nervous speaking to people during most of the day is the fact that we know what we are going to say and have a reason to say it. When we fail to memorize a speech adequately, we often feel like we are speaking someone else’s words and therefore feel awkward and self-conscious. For the audience, hearing a speech that feels like it comes “from the heart” and not from a manuscript or a teleprompter makes the message more powerful and more sincere and therefore creates a much greater feeling of community and participation.

Unfortunately, memorizing a speech has never become a science. After several thousand years of human beings giving orations and performing dramas, there remain as many techniques for memorizing speeches and lines as there ever have been. However, certain general principles have largely been established that can be useful in developing one’s own preferred technique for memorization. It is important to try out various combinations and strategies in order to find the one that best suits you:

1. *Read the speech out loud:* When we read to ourselves silently our minds and bodies are not preparing themselves to perform the text out loud. We read silently to absorb information and to process it, not to memorize it and reproduce it. An absolutely essential component of memorization is reading this speech out loud and in a strong voice that fills the room. Whispering to oneself on the bus will not produce a confident speech. One must find a private place in which one can hear one’s own voice.

2. *Practice with your whole body:* Do not practice a speech by sitting in a chair. Use your entire body. Walk around the room (ideally the room where you will be speaking) and use gestures as you speak to an imaginary audience. The more your body becomes engaged in the speech act, the more your mind becomes engaged as well. Treat your body as a partner in the speech and it will help you.
3. *Record and listen to yourself:* Listening to your own voice not only helps you improve delivery by hearing your own voice as an audience would hear it; it also improves memory by externalizing your voice and making you encounter it as you might encounter popular song lyrics.
4. *Break the speech into parts:* Think of a speech as you might think of rooms in a house. Each part of the speech should be a room with its own unique feel and purpose. Practice each part of the speech separately. Spend time in each room getting to know what it is like, including where you walk in and where you leave. Only after you know the atmosphere of each room should you put together the entire house tour.
5. *Use graphic conceptualization:* Diagram your speech on a piece of paper using creative images and drawings that represent your main points and forms of evidence. Feel free to be as ridiculous as possible, just so long as you remember the meanings of your icons. We may forget the specific words of a written manuscript; but we will not forget that we drew a picture of a person sunbathing next to an unhappy polar bear to remind us of the fact that global warming will melt the ice caps.
6. *Identify key points:* Try to summarize your speech out loud to yourself in as condensed a manner as possible, as if you were simply describing to somebody what your speech is “generally about” in casual conversation. This provides a general cognitive roadmap that allows you to always get back to the speech should you ever stumble or get lost.
7. *Take breaks:* Relying on one extended practice session is generally not sufficient to good memorization. Memory needs time to filter out what is important and then to solidify long-term memory by continually returning to the same thing. Taking breaks for a couple of hours, during which time you do nothing that is related to the speech, is often very helpful in retention. Memorization is a process and not a one-time event.

Discussion: In professional life, the importance of memory is made clear in both interview settings and formal business presentations. In both cases, using notecards or scripts often shows a person to lack knowledge and confidence, whereas the ability to answer questions about oneself or one’s sphere of expertise simply from memory holds an audience’s attention and commands their respect. What are some common techniques you have used in preparation for these situations? How successful were they?

The Fifth Canon: Delivery

The final requirement of rhetorical “form” is delivery. **Delivery** deals with the manner in which a speaker physically performs the speech through crafted use of the

voice and gesture. Whereas the canon of style addresses the manner in which a speech is composed through words, the canon of delivery addresses the manner in which a speech is actually performed with the body. Although conceptually the simplest of the canons, it perhaps is the most difficult to master and requires a great deal of training and experience. It also is one of the most important. Emerson provides the following encomium to deliver in his essay “Eloquence,” focusing specifically on the importance of voice:

A good voice has a charm in speech as in song; sometimes of itself enchains attention, and indicates a rare sensibility, especially when trained to wield all its powers. The voice, like the face, betrays the nature and disposition, and soon indicates what is the range of the speaker’s mind...Every one of us has at some time been the victim of a well-toned and cunning voice, and perhaps been repelled once for all by a harsh, mechanical speaker. The voice, indeed, is a delicate index of the state of mind. I have heard an eminent preacher say that he learns from the first tones of his voice on a Sunday morning whether he is to have a successful day. A singer cares little for the words of the song; he will make any words glorious.²⁰

For Emerson, not only can for delivery to undermine even the most carefully crafted composition, but it can also turn ordinary ideas into a glorious oration. Delivery has this power because of the unique capacity of the human voice to portray what Emerson refers to as the “nature and disposition” of the speaker. We are naturally drawn to people who speak with confidence and grace and power, trusting that the ideas contained within the language match the character in virtue conveyed through voice and stature.

Considered in its specific parts, the components of delivery are as follows:

1. *Appearance*: How a speaker dresses and physically presents him- or herself in terms of grooming and posture? The function of **appearance** is not only to please the eye but also to identify oneself to an audience as a certain type of person who will deliver the message in a certain type of way.
2. *Gesture*: How one uses one’s arms, legs, and face to convey nonverbal meanings. The function of gesture is to condense complex meanings into simple and elegant movements. Oftentimes we can say with a look what requires several sentences in words.
3. *Position*: How a speaker orients his or her body with respect to the audience, including the choice of whether to stand behind a podium, walk around, or sit down. The function of position is to develop a certain relationship to an audience and to the environment in which one is speaking.
4. *Eye contact*: The degree to which a speaker actually looks at members of the audience while speaking. Merely glancing at the audience during moments of silence does not constitute eye contact. Ideally, one must “look” as if one is having a conversation with somebody. The function of eye contact is to create a relationship with the audience.

²⁰<http://rwe.org/complete-works/viii-letters-and-social-aims/eloquence.html>.

5. *Articulation*: How distinctly words are pronounced so that each stands out. The opposite of articulation is mumbling. The function of articulation is to convey the impression that each word is meaningful and deserves attention.
6. *Pronunciation*: Being able to accurately pronounce words. The function of pronunciation is not only to accurately convey meaning but to show one's own credibility.
7. *Dialect*: Local phrasings common in a particular group but not used universally. The function of dialect is to either emphasize the unique characteristic of one's heritage to an audience that does not speak in it or to create a sense of identification with an audience that does.
8. *Pitch*: A musical term that refers to the ability to speak each word as if it was a separate note in a melody, moving up and down the scale. (Function: See Rate.)
9. *Volume*: The dynamic between softly and stridently spoken parts of the speech. (Function: See Rate.)
10. *Pauses*: The intentional silences that punctuate a speech. (Function: See Rate.)
11. *Rate*: The dynamic between rapidly and slowly spoken parts of the speech. Collectively, the function of pitch, volume, pauses, and rate is to convey emotional and connotative meaning as well as create tensions and resolutions. These are the most "musical" qualities of a speech and consequently have the most emotional and aesthetic effects on an audience.

Although it is important to consider each of these elements of delivery individually, when actually performing the speech one should think of delivery as a coherent whole. An effective way to think of the overall strategy of delivery is simply to consider how different acting styles dramatically alter the way that an audience interprets the language of a character. Just as different actors bring different elements to the same character, different delivery styles alter the way the same speech text is received. Consequently, one should think of an oratorical rostrum as a kind of stage in which one steps into a certain "role" or "character." Rather than isolating each of the elements of delivery and building them up into a unity, one should simply think of certain familiar performance styles and imitate them as best one can. Not only does this method provide a coherent delivery style to imitate, but it also puts speakers into a performative frame of mind that relieves the anxiety of feeling as if they have to "be themselves." The fact is that when people are delivering public speeches, the last thing they should do is act like they always act in everyday life. A speech is a performance and should be treated as such. Indeed, it is not infrequent that people who are quiet or reserved in everyday conversation turn out to be the best public speakers. As Emerson says, "The most hard-fisted, disagreeably restless, thought-paralyzing companion sometimes turns out in a public assembly to be a fluent, various and effective orator."²¹ The rostrum can be liberating for those who know it is a performance.

²¹<http://rwe.org/complete-works/viii-letters-and-social-aims/eloquence.html>.

Here are some general tips for preparing for delivery:

1. *Put the speech to memory:* All of the advice included in the canon of delivery will assist in producing a competent and persuasive delivery. Even the most charismatic individuals find it hard to look confident and composed when they forget their lines and must continually look down at their notecards. If the core elements of the speech are not adequately memorized, attempts at delivery often appear mechanical and forced.
2. *Know your audience:* Although this does not appear directly related to delivery, it is actually one of the most important elements. It is the difference between how we engage in conversations with our friends and how we speak to strangers. When we know our audience, we instinctively adapt our manner of speaking to their personalities and expectations, most notably in our level of formality but also in many other subtle aspects, including our rate of speaking, our volume, our level of animation, our use of humor, and our incorporation of slang terms or jargon. Knowing something about the audience ahead of time allows us to develop a presentation style adapted to their attitudes.
3. *Know yourself:* Not only is good delivery contingent on knowing the audience, it is also contingent on knowing how one stands in relationship to that audience. In our everyday interactions with other people, we play many roles adapted to those situations—for example, father, sister, friend, boss, employee, classmate, customer, entertainer, and so on. “Knowing yourself” with respect to public speaking does not refer to a deep philosophical inquiry into the soul; it simply means know who you are for the people you are speaking to at that moment. Oftentimes, awkward speaking situations arise because speakers try to play a role that they are not suited for, most comically when older professionals try to speak to younger students as if they are “classmates” and adopt the students’ mannerisms and ways of speaking. Adapting to an audience does not mean mimicking it; it simply means understanding the audience’s needs and expectations and trying to fulfill them using the best of one’s own resources.
4. *Know the speaking environment:* Whenever possible, a speaker should become familiar with the environment in which the speech is to occur, regardless of whether it is in a room, a park, a stadium, or an auditorium. This serves several purposes: (a) knowing the environment simply makes one feel more comfortable, much as walking into a gym familiarizes a visiting basketball team; (b) if the speech is to be amplified, testing equipment makes the speaker accustomed to the sound of his or her own voice; and (c) standing at the rostrum (or equivalent) allows a speaker to know where the audience will be sitting, where he or she can move while speaking, and what physical elements of the environment might be useful to incorporate into a speech in passing reference (e.g., the giant moose head hanging on the wall behind the podium as a resource for an opening joke).
5. *Have something to say:* It is very difficult to give an inspired delivery if the speech itself is boring and uninteresting for the speaker. Delivery is a natural outgrowth of enthusiasm, and enthusiasm is difficult to fake. Many

people who are charismatic and charming in their everyday interactions are surprised to find themselves speaking awkwardly and timidly when they step up to the rostrum because of the mistaken impression that their charisma and charm will make lemonade out of lemons. The only thing that a speech made out of lemons will produce is a sour taste and considerable disappointment.

6. *Break the speech into dramatic acts:* Think of a speech as a play. Determine the “feel” of each act and develop a performance style that makes the most of the material. Ideally, each act should demand a slightly different type of delivery. For instance, the introduction may require a storytelling delivery in which the speaker steps away from the rostrum and speaks directly to the audience in a lively and animated style. But the story may serve to introduce a serious thesis that demands a more formal delivery that sticks closer to the text that is read from the podium. And this action, in turn, might be followed by a commentary on a video presentation and then conclude with an informal question-and-answer session.
7. *Rehearse nonverbal gestures in front of a mirror:* Identify key moments in the speech that create opportunities for specific facial gestures or hand movements that can reinforce the points or themes in the speech. The importance of mastering these sorts of gestures can be seen in the act of standup comedians in particular, when the success or failure of jokes often is dependent on very subtle bodily movements and expressions. Rehearse these in front of a mirror until they become natural.
8. *Vary rate, pitch, volume, and pauses:* Public speaking requires us to speak in a manner that is much more animated and musical than our everyday speech. Experiment with different speech patterns as you would think of trying to create different ways of singing song lyrics. Record yourself saying the same sentence multiple ways to hear the difference. Avoid the mundane speech pattern of simply speaking each word with the same volume and rate and then simply dropping the pitch at the end of the sentence.
9. *Rehearse for time:* Do not time yourself by reading silently. Speaking out loud always takes more time than silent reading. Practice the speech from beginning to end and time yourself to ensure that you stay within set limits. Failing to rehearse for time creates enormous speaking anxiety once a speaker realizes he or she is approaching or over the allotted time.

Speaking Anxiety A speaker may say brilliant things, but if delivery is lacking, nobody is going to pay attention to what is said. Not surprisingly, then, the pressure that accompanies delivery leads many people to have intense speaking anxiety that is difficult to overcome. It is thus appropriate that our discussion of delivery continues with this challenge. Fear of public speaking traditionally ranks among the top three fears that people have. Being nervous, scared, and worried before making a public speech is completely normal. Michael Beatty identified eight factors of a speech situation that tend to increase **speaking anxiety**: the novelty of the experience, the formality of the occasion, the subordinate status of the speaker, the degree of conspicuousness felt by the speaker, an unfamiliar environment, the dissimilarity

and degree of attention from others, the degree to which one is being evaluated, and prior history.²² Added to these situational factors is also the degree to which speaking anxiety, for many people, is akin to an inborn, genetic predisposition.²³

Dealing with speaking anxiety is thus a complex challenge, as each speaker's anxiety will be unique and derived from different sources. The following are some basic strategies for dealing with speaking anxiety that can be employed by any speaker in preparation for a speech:²⁴

1. *Nervousness is natural*: Being nervous is a biological manifestation of the “fight-or-flight” mechanism. It shows that your body is preparing you to deal with a challenging situation. The goal is not to get rid of nervousness but to harness that energy and use it to your advantage.
2. *Everyone experiences it*: Speaking anxiety is universal. Even the greatest speakers get anxious because so much is riding on their words. But the feelings they experience are the same as those of a beginning student. The difference is that they have more tools to deal with that anxiety.
3. *You appear more relaxed than you feel*: Anxiety rarely manifests itself in overt signs of stress that can be seen by an audience. The most common expressions of stress are shaking hands and flushed faces, but usually they bother the speaker more than the audience.
4. *Have something important to say*: Nothing rattles a speaker more than standing up only to find that one's speech is boring even to oneself. Hastily written speeches made simply to “get it over with” are, more often than not, the causes of speaking anxiety because one starts judging one's own speech as a failure. Taking the time to say something you want to say makes speaking a much more pleasurable experience.
5. *Visualize success*: Like almost any coach in competitive sports will tell you, if you focus on the little things, you will get so caught up in minutiae that you lose sight of the “big picture.” As simplistic as it sounds, sometimes success comes from visualizing oneself succeeding.
6. *Release tension before speaking*: Purely on a physical note, clenching and then releasing muscles or exerting energy in some way loosens you up and often gets rid of nervousness that has been built up in your muscles.
7. *The audience is usually on your side*: With rare political exceptions, people do not attend speeches to watch people fail. They attend speeches to listen to people they find interesting. Hence, the audience will almost always wish for a speaker to do well. Despite the fact that they are ultimately “judging” your speech, they are a jury that hopes you succeed.

²²M. J. Beatty, “Situational and Predispositional Correlates of Public Speaking Anxiety,” *Communication Education* 37 (1988c), 28–39.

²³M. J. Beatty et al., “Communication Apprehension as Temperamental Expression: A Communibiological Paradigm,” *Communication Monographs* 65 (1998), 197–219.

²⁴For more on speaking anxiety, see Virginia P. Richmond and James C. McCroskey, *Communication: Apprehension, Avoidance, and Effectiveness*, 5th ed. (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1998); Peter Desberg, *No More Butterflies: Overcoming Stagefright, Shyness, Interview Anxiety, and Fear of Public Speaking* (Oakland, CA: New Harbinger, 1996).

8. *Practice*: Nothing replaces simple practice. Simply knowing the words of a speech is not sufficient for a good performance. You need to feel “at one” with the speech so that your words and actions occur naturally together. Practice until you have memorized the speech and then practice again until you have completely internalized it. Usually, shoot for reading a speech out loud to yourself three times before delivering it to your audience. Reading it “in your head” *is not* the same as reading out loud. Actually verbalizing the words helps your mouth get used to saying the words and your ears get used to hearing them.
9. *Experience makes you more confident*: The more you speak in public, the easier it will become. We learn by habit, and public speaking can become a habit once you break through the initial fear. By the end of a public speaking class, one may even begin to find pleasure in this habit.

This series of “tips” addresses the basics of putting oneself in the right frame of mind for public speaking. However, not all speaking anxiety can be dealt with by such simple attitude adjustments. A more systematic and clinical list of treatments includes the following:²⁵

1. *Systemic desensitization*: This procedure attempts to change unconscious negative associations with speaking situations. First, it introduces students to methods of relaxation (e.g., meditation), and once relaxed, a trainer has them visualize a series of speech situations, beginning with the least stressful and progressively increasing in perceived anxiety. Through repetition, individuals become more familiar with public speaking situations, thus normalizing them.
2. *Cognitive modification*: This treatment deals with negative and irrational cognitions of public speaking that take the form of beliefs, such as “I can’t do this” or “It’s too frightening.” With a trained therapist, individuals discuss specific fears about public speaking, including their self-evaluations, after which the therapist shows the irrationality of such self-evaluations and provides a coping statement (e.g., “I can handle this”) that can be used while speaking.
3. *COM therapy*: Another method of treatment is to change an individual’s orientation toward the function of public speaking. For those who hold a “performance-oriented” view, public speaking is like a trial by jury in which one is to perform and be judged. COM therapy attempts to change this orientation into a “communication-oriented” view in which public speaking is more like conversation in which each party is simply taking longer turns.
4. *Visualization*: Similar to systemic desensitization, visualization also begins with relaxation techniques, but instead of focusing simply on familiarizing oneself with the public speaking context, it focuses on visualizing success within that context. Visualization is thus a natural extension of cognitive modification.

²⁵The following list is a paraphrased summary of the conclusions presented in Graham D. Bodie, “A Racing Heart, Rattling Knees, and Ruminative Thoughts: Defining, Explaining, and Treating Public Speaking Anxiety.” *Communication Education* 59, no. 1 (Jan. 2010), 70–105.

5. *Skills training*: Skills training is another way of saying that practice, experience, and mastery will improve the confidence of public speakers.
6. *Performance feedback*: Another term for *constructive criticism*, performance feedback involves using nonverbal, oral, or written responses to a speaker's performance directed toward improving that performance. Notably, research shows that negative comments (when given in a constructive and honest spirit) are more helpful than positive ones, as they give speakers a sense that they know the problem and have the means to address it.

After years of research, studies have shown that no one method tends to work for all individuals. Each person faces his or her own particular type of anxiety and must develop a method tailored to individual needs. However, employing a variety of methods at different times, each overlapping the other, tends to have more benefit than adopting only one.

Delivery Form One of the most basic elements of any speaking genre involves the expectations for how the speech is going to be delivered. The choice of how you will deliver your speech has important consequences for how it will be received by an audience. The choice also opens up and limits certain possibilities for how a speech will be written, how much information it will contain, and how long it will be. The following are considerations in delivery form:

1. *Manuscript*: Reading from a manuscript means writing out every word of a speech and delivering it as written. Except in cases with a teleprompter, the manuscript should be on a podium and the speaker should have practiced the speech to the extent that much of it has been partially memorized. This allows a speaker to look down briefly to keep his or her place but still maintain eye contact with an audience. In this regard, it is helpful to write marks on the speech for when to breathe (~), when to look up (↑), and when to look back down (↓) so that you can memorize particular sections that you think warrant a more significant delivery. Manuscript reading allows for a careful sculpting of stylistic language (in the cases of commemorative speaking) or complex arguments (in deliberative speaking) that would otherwise be difficult to convey. Manuscripts are most proper for formal occasions in which the audience expects and demands this kind of complexity and subtlety. However, manuscript may provide a “crutch” that speakers rely on too much, which causes them to effectively ignore the audience and deliver the speech as if they were simply reading out loud.²⁶
2. *Memory*: Delivering from memory is to write a manuscript first and then rehearse it until one knows it by heart. At its best, it has all the advantages of manuscript style without the disadvantages, for it allows a speaker to engage an audience directly and to walk around a “stage” without being tied to a podium. However, speeches from memory also put one at great risk. If one forgets even the smallest part of a speech, there is the danger that one's mind

²⁶See James C. Humes, *Talk Your Way to the Top* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980).

might go blank like that of an actor in a play, at which point there is nothing to help the speaker find his or her place. In addition, relying on memory makes it almost impossible to adapt to an audience during the speech, such as when external interference occurs or when a speaker simply realizes that something isn't working. Speeches from memory are thus best when they are short and have only a few simple points, such as a wedding toast or an argument in a public meeting. They also are excellent for storytelling exercises, as stories are easier to remember and audiences enjoy hearing stories from people as if they simply sprung naturally from memory.

3. *Impromptu*: Delivering impromptu speeches means to speak without preparation on a subject given to you at the moment. This form is the most natural and spontaneous and thus often the most interesting to hear. However, it also limits one's ability to sculpt a careful argument and also provides no safety net should one run out of ideas. The classic case of impromptu speaking is parliamentary debate, in which a subject is announced and debaters have just a few minutes to come up with opposing arguments. Exercises of this kind, also helpful in public speaking classes, allows you the freedom to be creative and to gain experience speaking before audiences without having anything "at stake." In public, impromptu speaking may be required during deliberative meetings, such as in the boardroom, the town hall, or the family kitchen, and also during celebratory occasions in which people are called upon to make a speech about themselves or others. And sometimes impromptu speaking is simply a way to entertain friends.
4. *Extemporaneous*: The essential feature of this speech is the notecard, which includes key points, quotes, and transitions drawn from a larger outline but leaves the speaker to fill in the gaps during the actual delivery of the speech. This form provides structure but allows for adaptation in such a way that, ideally, the speaker will be able to connect with the audience on a personal level while still making a formal argument or presentation. A good notecard will thus be easy to read, will not be cluttered with information, and will support the speech by providing both information and delivery instructions, such as when to look up, when to make a gesture, when to speak loudly, and when to slow down. Extemporaneous speeches are ideal for people making "official" presentations in front audience members who feel free to break in and ask questions at any time. The speaker is able to deal with such interruptions because he or she still has all the important information directly at hand, and he or she can flip backward and forward without completely disrupting the flow of the speech.

Discussion: Although attention to delivery in public speaking often feels forced, we in fact modify our delivery all the time to suit different occasions. The words, pace, volume, and articulation of our language varies depending on whether we are speaking to parents, friends, employers, teachers, or strangers. Think of a time when you had to "break bad news" to multiple people at different times. How did you adapt your delivery for each audience in order to maximize positive effects and minimize negative ones based on your understanding of the situation?