



# YALI Network

Public Speaking  
Advice and Checklist

Public speaking doesn't always mean standing in front of a large crowd giving a presentation. In fact, any time you are speaking to one or more people, that is technically public speaking. Public speaking can take many different forms, and it is important to always tailor your content and message to the specific audience and purpose. The following page includes a few common public speaking prompts that you will most likely come across at some point, along with advice on how to prepare for them. In this document, you will also find a checklist to help you get ready for a speech, along with a checklist that can help you evaluate what worked well and what could be improved after you have delivered your speech.

# Public Speaking Advice

## 1. Presenting an idea

YALI Network members have always been creative, inventive, and full of great ideas. If you have an idea you want to share with your peers, network, an investor, etc., it is a good idea to have a short introduction to your idea prepared. In other words, create an elevator pitch. This type of speech is usually less than a minute in length (or, the amount of time you may spend in an elevator). An elevator pitch can be used in an interview or while networking. It can also be used to start a longer speech. The goal of an elevator pitch is to provide enough information to inform your audience about your topic or idea, while still leaving enough information out that they are intrigued to learn more. Remember to hit the most important points and to keep it short—just like an elevator ride!

## 2. Talking about yourself

It can be difficult to talk about your accomplishments without feeling like you are boasting. But that shouldn't stop you; you should be proud of your work. When volunteering or working with an organization, you can take a "servant leadership" approach ([yali.state.gov/servant-leadership](https://yali.state.gov/servant-leadership)) – talking about who you are helping and not just about what you have personally done. Frame your accomplishments to emphasize teamwork and the impact you had on others, rather than just yourself. If you solved a particular problem, talk about how it benefited your community and made people's lives better. Remember, when explaining your accomplishments, pick the one that is most relevant to the situation and delve into the details of that specific accomplishment. The same applies when discussing what you are passionate about.

## 3. Persuading your audience

In a lot of speeches, you may find yourself trying to convince your audience to agree with your point of view. When developing a persuasive speech, it is important to put yourself in your audience's shoes. Ask yourself, "What do they currently believe and why?" Then ask, "Why do I believe something different and why should they consider my point of view?" It is important to identify at least three main points that support your case. Think about the questions your audience may ask and try to incorporate the answers into your speech.

## Preparing for an interview

An interview may not seem like a public speaking opportunity, but it is. Interviews often start with the instruction to "Tell me about yourself." This is a great time to use a prepared biography, customized toward the position or opportunity for which you are interviewing. In the biography, you will want to tell people the most important things about yourself and what you are most proud of.

To learn more about preparing a biography, check out the YALI Network "Writing an Exciting Personal Biography" blog post at <https://yali.state.gov/writing-an-exciting-personal-bio/>.

# Public Speaking Checklists

## Before the Speech

Before your speech, ask yourself the following questions. For each, answer yes or no. If you answer yes, move to the next question. If you answer no, first determine if the question is relevant to the speech you are giving. If it is, stop and take some time to complete the step.

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- |  |                              |                             |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Have you written out your full speech?   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have you practiced your speech?  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have you practiced your speech in front of others?   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have you timed your speech?  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have you asked for feedback from your peers and others you look up to?                         | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you create notecards or memorize your speech?  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are you confident with your speech?  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you need any visual aids?   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • If you need visual aids, have you created them?  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Will you need any technology, such as a microphone, projector, or computer during your speech? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • If so, have you requested them ahead of time?  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Will there be a question and answer (Q&A) period?  | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Have you practiced answers to some of the questions you expect to receive?                   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

## After the Speech

After the speech, ask yourself the following questions. As you did for the previous checklist, answer yes or no. If you answer no, ask yourself why and how you can improve next time. This is a great way to gauge how you did so that you can continue to improve your public speaking skills.

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|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Did you feel comfortable with your delivery?                           | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you pace yourself and speak clearly?                               | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Do you feel that you practiced enough?                                 | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you make eye contact with the audience?                            | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Did you hit all of your main points and follow your speech as planned? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If applicable, did you ask for feedback from people in the audience?   | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If applicable, did you use your visual aids the way you intended?      | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Would you make any changes to your speech in the future?               | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |



