

In-Class Speaking Exercises

- **Introductions**

This activity works well on the first day of class. Have the students work with a partner to learn all they can about each other in a short amount of time. Then each student must present a brief speech introducing her/his partner to the class. It is often helpful to stress that the introductions must be memorable as well as informative.
- **General impromptus**
 - **Topics from a hat**

This exercise has students draw a topic from the hat and present a brief presentation about it. The topics can be either descriptive or persuasive and work best when they are a bit quirky or fun (ex. Describe a day in the life of your backpack; Describe 3 uses for a drinking glass other than holding a beverage; etc.)
 - **Photos from a hat**

A nice variation on the topics from a hat activity for a descriptive class. Instead of written topics, students select from a number of images you have provided (usually with all captions removed) and have to tell us the “story” of the image.
- **Audience Analysis**
 - **Guess the audience**

For this activity, break students into small groups. Each group selects from you a description of a speech they must give about a topic from the course to a particular audience (eg. High school students, parents, etc.). Every group has the same topic but a different target audience. Give each group time to prepare the short (2 min) presentation. After each presentation, the class has to decide who the intended audience is and what cues helped them to know.
 - **Multiple audiences**

Break into small groups. Each group is assigned a product or other element related to the course. Each group then has to compose 3 different 30 second advertisements for the product pitched to 3 different audiences. The class discusses after each set of ads who the target audience was, how they know, and how effective the ad seemed to be.
- **Delivery Errors**

For classes particularly concerned with delivery, this exercise is a fun way to highlight common problems. Each student selects (either randomly or they could be allowed to choose) from a list of common delivery errors (eg. monotone voice, playing with hair, reading from notecards, swaying, etc.). They then present a speech on any topic during which they attempt to perform the error. At the end of the presentation, students in the class must decide which error was being enacted and discuss how it impacted the speech.