

Don't just reflect, perform!

At this point, you should realize how important practice is to a high quality speech. This five-step process will maximize your practice time.

1. Start by practicing in front of the mirror. At first, you may be uncomfortable watching yourself in action. Give yourself one or two practices without any judgment, so that you can get more comfortable seeing yourself give your speech.
2. Now that you are a little more comfortable, you can start critiquing yourself. Present your speech in front of the mirror. Pay special attention to gestures, expressions, and overall appearance. Use the space below (or a separate sheet of paper) to write about positive and negative aspects of your delivery that you observed in your reflection.
3. After adjusting your speech using what you learned from your reflection practice, find some friends or family to be your test audience. Present your speech to them, but do not ask them for feedback during this first practice. This is for you to get comfortable with having an audience.
4. After this first try, you are ready to start receiving feedback. Be sure to ask your audience to focus on specific aspects of your speech, like your delivery or overall organization. Check Chapter 19 for other suggestions. Use the space below to write positive and negative feedback that you found useful.
5. Now incorporate this feedback into your speech. If you make significant changes, you may find it helpful to repeat steps 1–4.