

Terms	Best Practice	Diagnose	Common Causes	Recommendations
Volume Projection	They can be heard clearly from anywhere in the room, yet they are not uncomfortably loud or straining to be loud.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they speaking too softly or overly loud? • When they are in a larger room, will people be able to hear them? • Does their voice sound strained, tired or hoarse by the end of their talk? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Naturally quiet or loud person • Nervous or intimidated • Voice strain can be caused by trying to talk louder rather than projecting more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice speaking as if someone is in the back of the room • Ask the organizers for a microphone • Try vocal exercises to project – it'll help you feel less tired after your talk too! • Practice talking at different volumes with someone until you get a better sense of how loud is appropriate
Intonation Pitch Tone Timbre	All of these element should work together to convey the meaning of a given thought (e.g. sad, powerful, questioning, humorous), and therefore they should alter throughout a presentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is their voice engaging? • Are they monotone or is their voice melodic? • Do they incorporate meaningful pauses throughout their presentation? • How is their pitch? High pitches are hard to listen to, while low pitches can make it difficult to discern separate words • Are they overly dynamic such that it's overwhelming? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monotone voice can come from feeling unconnected to the material they're presenting • Feeling uncertain about the ideas they're presenting (e.g. trailing off or ending sentences as questions) • They feel like they're over exaggerating but it doesn't come across • They are naturally very expressive • Overcompensating leading to overly dynamic, cluttered vocal patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you've lost sight of what excited you about your talk, find ways to incorporate what makes you passionate. This will naturally help your voice sound more engaging • Practice a couple sentences while varying pitch, tone, and intonation to give different meanings or find the right level of variation so that it's engaging • Work on pauses and pace to tone down overly expressive vocals
Enunciation	Words should be pronounced clearly and completely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they speaking clearly? • Are they enunciating enough? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking too fast can cause jumbled words • Non-native English speakers may have difficulty pronouncing some words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break down complex sentences. Do you need all those long/difficult words in the same sentence? • Practice saying difficult words or phrases • Speak slower, especially if there's a section of your talk with difficult words
Pace Rhythm Pauses	<p>Use rhythm to carry meaning. Slow the pace to emphasize key ideas, and quicken the pace to show excitement or humor. Incorporate pauses to emphasize an important point.</p> <p>Note: A longer silence will help re-capture an audience's attention if they've lost focus.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does their rhythm seem normal? • Are they talking too fast or too slow? • Are they taking pauses between ideas / sentences? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to fit too much content into their allotted time • Nervous or uncomfortable with silence while in front of an audience • Unprepared or unsure of what to say can cause pausing in weird places while they think 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically assess talk content and decide if some material can be removed • Practice again but talk slower • Speak in short sentences supported by small breaths to produce a smooth rhythm • Write in places you want to pause in your notes • Uses pauses between ideas to give your brain time to catch up
Filler words	An ideal presentation will not include filler words. Filler words are distracting and take away from the message, and excessive use can even reduce the presenter's credibility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples: basically, you know, I mean, uh/um, actually, okay, right, well, so 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unprepared or unsure of what they want to say • Nervous • Habit • Talking faster than they can think • Nervous or uncomfortable with pausing and silence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try replacing filler words with pauses • Become aware of when you use them: record and watch yourself or have a friend listen and stop or interrupt you every time you use one • Work on smoothing out your transitions so you can flow from one idea to another without needing to think

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Eye contact	Use eye contact to engage the audience. Eye contact can help make the audience feel like you're talking <u>to</u> them, not at them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are they maintaining eye contact? • Are they looking at their slides or computer? • Is their body facing the audience or turned sideways or towards the screen? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nervous • Feeling overly exposed standing in front of a group, which leads to wanting to hide from or avoid the audience • Too focused on their slides and the figures/images 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If making eye contact is difficult, try looking at someone's forehead, a colorful shirt, or look just above people's heads • Rather than scanning the audience, take time to make one-on-one eye contact with individuals • If you're in a large room, turn your head or even body to talk to all corners of the room, not just the people in the middle
Movement	Incorporate deliberate movements that help illustrate or emphasize points, while minimizing repetitive or unnecessary motion that is distracting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any distracting movements? • Any excessive hand movements? • Are they pacing, rocking, or exhibiting nervous behavior? • Are there points in the talk where movement could be used to enhance their delivery? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nervous energy • Some people prefer to walk and talk while others like to be stationary • They normally "talk with their hands" • It is common for people to start out presenting away from their computer but then move to stand behind the podium (because standing in front of an audience can be scary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you're trying to stand still, think about grounding your feet throughout the presentation • If you have excessive hand movements, try arms at your side or hooking your thumb in your front pants pocket • If you prefer to walk, think about where you can build in movement so that it's helpful, like during transitions between ideas • If you've practiced and can present without your notes, commit to standing away from the podium and hold your ground even if you get nervous
Body language Posture Power poses	<p>Your body language should display confidence and be open and friendly.</p> <p>Start off with a good posture (straight back, level chin, and eyes facing the audience) to show your audience that you are prepared and ready. Use power poses to command attention and build confidence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is their posture? • Do they have defensive or timid body language? • Are they using / leaning on any unnecessary props? (e.g. pointer, wall, or table) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor body language often stems from feeling nervous or wanting to avoid / hide from an audience • Some people are overly confident and it can come off as cocky or arrogant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record yourself to see what kind of body language you're giving off • Have a friend watch you present and ask for their honest feedback • Refer to our Nonverbal Communication CommKit article for suggested power poses and try different ones to see which makes you feel most confident • Use your daily interactions with friends and colleagues to become more conscientious of your posture