

Talking too quietly is not effective. Talking too loudly is annoying. Try talking at just the right loudness. If necessary, announce to the audience that they should tell you if you should talk louder or softer.

Saying “um” or “okay” repeatedly is very distracting to your audience. Practice what you are going to say in front of others and ask them to signal you if you say um or okay often.

Slouching or crossing your arms in front of you makes you seem disinterested. Find a comfortable way to stand. For example, put your arms at your side or your hands crossed in front of you when you speak. Use your hands to make important points.

You lose your audience when you look at only one person the entire time. Be sure to look at everyone in the audience when you talk.

Jangling bracelets, tags hanging out of clothes and T-shirts with messages on them are distracting. Try to dress so that the audience focuses on you - not your clothes.

The audience cannot hear you well nor will they pay attention if you talk while writing on a piece of flipchart paper or the blackboard. If you need to write something, save your talking until you turn around.

Yanking on your hair or flipping it behind your shoulders is very distracting. Try to avoid distracting habits.

Chewing gum or sucking on candy does NOT work well when speaking. Be sure to spit out your gum or get rid of candy or food before you begin.

Slang or jargon (specialized or technical talk) may confuse lots of the audience if they are not familiar with those words. Use standard English when talking OR define words if you think the audience may not understand what you mean.

Head motions (such as excessive nodding or eye rolling) may convey the wrong message and be distracting. Be conscious of your head movements (do they convey affirmation, denial, curiosity, etc)