



Tips on preparing to stand and deliver

Voice + Body + Breath

To deliver your 3-minute thesis well, you need your voice, your body and your breath to work together. The trouble is, in a competition setting, the conditions will probably be less than ideal: you are likely to be sitting down waiting for your turn to speak with very little room to move around and no opportunity to warm up your voice. If you reach the final round of the competition, you will face the additional challenge of sitting at a table with fellow contenders having just been served a 3-course meal!

What can you do to prepare yourself?

1. Outside the competition space:

Warm up your voice

It's important to warm up your voice before speaking, but it's not easy to do this once you are seated with other people, so...

- i) Find a quiet space away from the main event *before you sit down* (or make an excuse to get away briefly) and hum for a minute or so. Start with a low note and move smoothly up to a high note and back a few times. Try humming up and down a scale alternating the volume (loud/soft) with each note.
- ii) Say a few tongue twisters with exaggerated enunciation (it's great if you have 3 or 4 different ones that you know well, each of which works on different sounds).
- iii) Blow through your lips like a horse. This will feel silly, but will help to loosen your mouth!
- iv) Sing the 5 vowel sounds to any note you like, exaggerating the shape of your mouth as you do so.
- v) Stick your tongue out as far as you can and open your mouth as wide as possible.

Drink plenty of water. Take a small bottle with you to sip from as needed.

2. In your seat (don't worry about what other people think):

Relax your body

- Try hunching your shoulders on an in-breath and letting them fall completely on an out-breath. Repeat this several times.
- Roll the shoulders forwards and backwards a few times.
- Fake yawning is a good way to release tight jaw muscles.
- You can also look down (for the sake of discretion!) and write your name with your tongue in large capital letters on the inside of both cheeks.
- It's very important to stand up at least 1 minute before you are due to speak to allow your blood pressure to adjust. (When you first stand up, blood flow to the lower body is greatly increased – you need to allow time for it to flow back up so you don't get dizzy!). Stand with feet hip-width apart and knees slightly bent while waiting and when on stage.

3. Once you are standing:

Focus on your breath

People often think of taking deep inward breaths before a daunting task. In fact, to remain calm it's better to concentrate on breathing *out*.

Once you are standing, imagine your breath following the outline of a rectangle. Breathe in along the short sides and out along the long ones.

Follow this breathing pattern until it's your turn to take the stage...

SMILE and sock it to them. BEST OF LUCK!