

Preparation and Practice

Preparation and practice are the things that most students think they don't need to do. They might have planned the speech, but they haven't practiced out loud, or even timed the speech to see how long it is.

Scripts, notes and cue cards

Many people start to prepare for their presentation by writing a **script**.

A script is the full speech written down word by word. By writing the speech and then practicing it out loud it is possible to find problems and improve the presentation. However, unless you want to give a manuscript presentation (see last section) then this is just the start of the preparation for the speech.

The next step is to make **notes** from your script. To make notes you want to find:

- Keywords
- Facts
- Quotes, jokes and other important sentences

You should now practice the presentation without the script using only the notes. This will make the presentation more natural.

The last step is to write the notes onto **cue cards**.

Cue cards are postcard sized cards that you can easily fit into your hand. Index or file cards work very well.



Class Activity

Look at the following speech and make notes from the script.

Award Speech Example

Good Evening.

I am honored to have been asked to speak this evening and I congratulate each of you. Your achievements in Scholarship, Leadership, Community Service, and Character are being awarded here tonight by this university.

An honor such as this is a wonderful way for Payap and the community to recognize what you have done.

I believe that what should make you and your parents the most proud is not the actual award itself, but what you had to do to get it.

Scholarship is much more than just getting straight A's. It is a life-long love of learning. Each time you decide you WANT to learn something, the experience will be so rewarding that the next time becomes easier.

Leadership is not only about being elected by others. Leadership is an attitude cultivated over time. Are you one to stand up for what you believe in and 'face the music' even when that music happens to be unpleasant? Do you have a vision? These are all questions that true leaders will answer yes.

Community service is an attitude. What I'm talking about is that in the end, when it is all done, you can look back and realize that you did something worthwhile. That you helped your fellow man in some way.

Finally, character. I truly believe what Thomas Macaulay said, "The measure of a man's real character is what he would do if he knew he would never be found out."

Being honest and honorable when others are watching is important, but being true to yourself is more so.

One final thing, each person's goals are different, and what comes easy to one may be difficult for another. Therefore, do not squash others' dreams.

In conclusion, I congratulate you for this honor. You are truly the best of the best. Enjoy yourself, and remember as Mother Teresa said, "Life is a promise; fulfill it."

Using a Mirror

The best way to practice by yourself is to use a mirror. When you have your cue cards made, find the biggest mirror in your house and perform your speech to yourself. Remember to look into your own eyes and try not to look down at the notes all of the time.

Time yourself

Make sure you have a clock or watch. Time your speech in the mirror. Do this a few times so you know how long it will be. This is important if you have a time restraint.

Record yourself

If you have a tape recorder or video recorder you can record your mirror speech. This will allow you to find problems.

Use a friend

If you have a good friend, then use them as the practice audience. Get them to tell you the best bits and the worst bits of your speech and then improve it.

Presentation:

Choose a famous person and prepare a 3 minute presentation about them. Use notes and cue cards to delivery your presentation.