

## HOMEWORK HELP

## SPEAK NATURALLY

## Oral Reports Made Easy

Does the thought of public speaking start your stomach churning like a tornado? Would you rather get caught in an avalanche than give a speech?

Giving an oral report does not have to be a natural disaster. The basic format is very similar to that of a written essay. There are two main elements that make up a good oral report—the writing and the presentation. As you write your oral report, remember that your audience will be hearing the information as opposed to reading it. Follow the guidelines below, and there will be clear skies ahead.

## TIP:

Make sure you practice your presentation a few times. Stand in front of a mirror or have a parent record you so you can see if you need to work on anything, such as eye contact.

## Writing Your Material

Follow the steps in the “How to Write a Perfect Essay” section, but prepare your report to be spoken rather than written.

Try to keep your sentences short and simple. Long, complex sentences are harder to follow. Limit yourself to just a few key points. You don’t want to overwhelm your audience with too much information. To be most effective, hit your key points in the introduction, elaborate on them in the body, and then repeat them once again in your conclusion.

## An oral report has three basic parts:

- **Introduction**—This is your chance to engage your audience and really capture their interest in the subject you are presenting. Use a funny personal experience or a dramatic story, or start with an intriguing question.
- **Body**—This is the longest part of your report. Here you elaborate on the facts and ideas you want to convey. Give information that supports your main idea, and expand on it with specific examples or details. In other words, structure your oral report in the same way you would a written essay so that your thoughts are presented in a clear and organized manner.
- **Conclusion**—This is the time to summarize the information and emphasize your most important points to the audience one last time.

## Preparing Your Delivery

## 1 Practice makes perfect.

Practice! Practice! Practice! Confidence, enthusiasm, and energy are key to delivering an effective oral report, and they can best be achieved through

rehearsal. Ask family and friends to be your practice audience and give you feedback when you’re done. Were they able to follow your ideas? Did you seem knowledgeable and confident? Did you speak too slowly or too fast, too softly or too loudly? The more times you practice giving your report, the more you’ll master the material. Then you won’t have to rely so heavily on your notes or papers, and you will be able to give your report in a relaxed and confident manner.

## 2 Present with everything you’ve got.

Be as creative as you can. Incorporate videos, sound clips, slide presentations, charts, diagrams, and photos. Visual aids help stimulate your audience’s senses and keep them intrigued and engaged. They can also help to reinforce your key points. And remember that when you’re giving an oral report, you’re a performer. Take charge of the spotlight and be as animated and entertaining as you can. Have fun with it.

## 3 Keep your nerves under control.

Everyone gets a little nervous when speaking in front of a group. That’s normal. But the more preparation you’ve done—meaning plenty of researching, organizing, and rehearsing—the more confident you’ll be. Preparation is the key. And if you make a mistake or stumble over your words, just regroup and keep going. Nobody’s perfect, and nobody expects you to be.