## What are speaking skills?

People believe that effective speaking is a natural talent. Either you have it or you don't. But this is not true. You can learn different types of speaking skills and become good at it.

You can’t take speaking skills lightly, no matter how talented you are. If you speak with conviction and passion, it will help the audience relate to you, believe in you, and remember you.

The question then is: what are speaking skills? They are techniques that enable a speaker to convey a message effectively.

Speaking skills don’t just involve the use of the right words. Your [body language](https://harappa.education/harappa-diaries/body-language-in-communication) also has a major role in conveying a message.

## There are three main aspects of effective speaking:

### ****Vocabulary****

Language is an integral part of speaking skills. The words you use must suit the occasion and the audience. For example, the language you use when speaking to a friend is different from the one you use for a formal presentation.

Effective speakers customize their message to suit their audience. The audience is familiar with certain types of words. It’s important to use such words to get them to respond. For example, using industry terms in a client meeting can evoke desired responses.

As a general rule, shorter and simpler sentences work well. They are easier to process and understand, and they create a sense of urgency. For example, in the Avengers series of movies, when Captain America says, “Avengers assemble!”, and not “Avengers, gather around me”, the message becomes memorable and impactful.

Similarly, the memorable line in Jawaharlal Nehru’s Independence Day speech in August 1947, “At the stroke of the midnight hour”, conveyed the gravity of the occasion, which a line like “At 12.00 am...” may not have.

### ****Voice****

Another aspect of speaking skills in communication that is often ignored is your voice. It includes pitch, tone, and strength. How you speak signals your emotional state.

A low voice and too many pauses could denote hesitation. Clarity and volume could denote confidence. A strong and confident tone portrays conviction. People believe what you say when you deliver it in a strong voice.

Public speaking requires practice. You might be quite comfortable talking to small groups or in informal settings. But that is not the same as addressing a large crowd, which is why practice and rehearsals matter.

You can slowly read your message aloud, making sure you pause at the appropriate places. This will help you polish your speaking style. Good orators have a tone and style which they own. It’s his distinctive voice that makes Morgan Freeman a favorite Hollywood narrator.

### ****Nonverbal****

The final aspect of speaking skills is not about speaking at all. Nonverbal communication consists of body language. It includes facial expression, posture, eye contact, and hand gestures. Your body language must match your words for your address to be effective.

Your body language signals to the audience how invested you are into what you are speaking about. It shows the passion behind your words and helps draw the audience emotionally to your message and make them feel involved.

## The importance of speaking skills

You might think that you’re never going to lead an army or coach a cricket team. So why would you need to practice speaking skills? The fact is, such skills will come in handy not only at your workplace but also in your personal life. Here's how:

### ****Getting them to say ‘yes’****

One of the objectives of speaking effectively is the ability to persuade: when you need your manager to back your idea, when you want your team to work longer hours or when your spouse needs convincing to watch your favorite movie. These are all instances that require effective speaking.

The whole point of speaking skills is to be able to sway people’s opinions. It’s to get them to act in alignment with your goals.

### ****Developing a career edge****

Being an effective speaker separates you from the corporate herd and pitches you as a valuable resource for your company. It, of course, gives you an edge over your colleagues.

Effective communicators get special treatment because they are often asked to represent the company. They’re the ones meeting the important clients, negotiating and closing deals, and building a reputation for the company.

For example, when you need to impress a new client, you send your best salesperson. You won’t send in someone new or inexperienced. The best salesperson is almost always your best speaker.

When it’s time for promotions and bonuses, speakers are rewarded first. Companies invest significantly in their training. They’re the ones who get groomed for leadership posts.

### ****Holistic communications development****

Speaking skills hold a special place of value. Good speakers are also good writers for they would have written several drafts of each speech.

Good speakers are also those who can connect and empathize with people. This makes them approachable and authentic. Often, people gravitate towards them for support and advice.

They are also readers, as reading helps expand the vocabulary and develop the flair for using suitable words for different situations.

Thus, practicing speaking skills leads to the development of writing, listening, and reading skills too.

### ****Becoming an expert****

Effective speaking signals subject matter expertise because of the research that the making of a good speech would involve. That is why a good speaker is also regarded as a leader and influencer.

Popular intellectuals such as Barack Obama and Richard Dawkins are all good speakers. When they talk, we believe them. We trust them to know what they’re talking about. To rise to a position of fame and influence, having effective speaking skills is a must.

### ****Feel like a boss****

Establishing a genuine connection with the audience gives a sense of accomplishment. Listening to the audience's applause is a great boost for self-esteem. Being appreciated by the audience is like receiving a gift for all the hard work that a speaker puts in.

## Types of speaking skills and frameworks

While speaking effectively is rewarding, it is also challenging. Various speaking skills and frameworks can help overcome the challenges.

### ****1. Aristotle’s Appeals****

One of the most useful frameworks speakers use is Aristotle’s Appeals. They help you find various ways to appeal to the audience. Your appeal can be based on logic, authority, and emotion.

The audience might listen to you because your argument makes sense. They might listen because you’ve appealed to their anger or sadness or some other emotion. They could also listen to you because you’re an expert.

These different types of appeals are also known as Logos, Ethos, and Pathos.

### ****2. The PAM Framework****

Another useful framework is PAM (Purpose, Audience, and Message). You convey the purpose or objective of your speech to the audience through a verbal message.

The PAM framework requires you to know your audience, their triggers, likes, and dislikes.

### ****3. The Three Ws****

You can also use an introspective framework. This is where The Three Ws of speaking will come to your aid.

The first ‘W’ is ‘Why are you delivering this speech?’ The second is ‘Who is listening?’ And the third ‘What are you talking about?’  Together these questions help you define your purpose and your audience. The third question helps you structure your speech.

The importance of speaking effectively lies in its tremendous potential to induce change. A good speech can inspire employees and even save companies.

Their words may fade over time, but the feeling they leave us with never diminishes. In the words of American poet Maya Angelou, “I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”