

[Morse code beeps]

[Whoosh]

[Helicopter rotor]

Hi. My name is Annika Thomas, and I'm here with the AeroAstro Communication Lab at MIT, and today we're going to be talking about giving effective presentations.

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to understand how voice, pacing, and physical presence affect presentation quality.

You'll be able to identify habits that interfere

with effective presentations and you'll be able to practice strategies for speaking clearly, confidently, and audibly.

Effective presentations include some criteria for success, such as they should be clear the audience can easily follow your message.

Your presentations should be audible, your voice carries without strain.

They should be controlled, so your pacing supports understanding of the audience and the message that you're getting across.

They should be intentional, with emphasis and pauses that help guide meaning.

And they should be physically open, your posture and gestures should support engagement.

Now we'll start with talking a little bit about voice basics

and how sound is produced.

So your voice changes based on airflow and muscle use.

Most people speak primarily in a lower, or chest dominant, range and a comfortable mix

during your presentations supports volume, clarity, and stamina.

We're going to start with an activity on voice awareness.

It should take about three minutes, so find the activity in the supplementary materials called "Voice Awareness"

and follow the instructions.

You're going to say one sentence aloud at a normal pitch

and then repeat it at a higher pitch
and then slightly lower.
Notice where your voice feels
most comfortable and clear.
[Alien spaceship beeps]
Now we'll talk a
little bit about nerves and stress.
Some nervousness
when giving a presentation,
called eustress, is actually normal
and helpful, but too much stress
can begin to interfere with your breathing
and your voice control.
In your presentations, physical tension
often shows up before we notice it
mentally.
Now, while giving presentations,
there are some ways
in which you can help breath support
and projection.
Projection comes from breath support,
not from yelling.
Your posture and your breathing
will affect your volume and tone,
and speaking louder doesn't
always mean speaking more clearly.
Now we'll talk a little bit about pacing.
Speaking too fast, which is easy to do
when you get nervous while
giving a presentation, actually hurts
the clarity of your presentation.
It's one of the most common issues that
people have while giving presentations,
and it can be caused by nerves,
over familiarity with the material,
or a lack of practice.
Faster speech
actually reduces comprehension more
so than quiet speech does.
Some strategies that you can use
to slow down while giving presentations
include practicing
more at the right cadence,
actively breathing in between sentences
in order to force pauses,
making checkpoints,
so getting to a section
early in
your presentation is not a good thing,
and actively think about consonants

at the end of sentences.

Now we're going to do another activity about pacing checks.

This should take about five minutes to complete.

You'll read the paragraph on the activity sheet out loud, speaking at your natural pace, followed by, on your second read, intentionally slow down by pausing briefly at commas and taking a full breath at each sentence break.

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Now we'll talk a little bit about clarity, emphasis, and filler words. Fillers are normal, but can be distracting while giving a presentation.

Emphasis and pauses while giving that presentation, actually change the meaning of what you're saying. And silence is more effective than fillers.

Now, your physical presence and body language are very important while giving presentations.

You want to avoid closed off positions, you should appear open to the audience. Avoid cocking your head.

Don't put your hands in your pockets or behind your back.

You should be facing the audience while giving your presentation, making eye contact with at least one, if not a few of the audience members.

If this makes you nervous, you can also look at the back of the room. Don't spend your presentation facing towards the screen.

You also, while practicing your presentations, should practice holding a natural stance so it feels the same when you're actually giving the presentation.

Now, by the end of this lesson, you should be able to practice effective presentation skills,

make small focused changes to the way
in which you present, and you should
choose 1 or 2 skills that you can practice
consistently in your presentations.
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