
Avoid These Common Speech Mistakes

Instead of....	Try...
“So, my topic is/ I’ve been asked to speak a bit about...”	Grabbing the listener’s attention, telling a story, or using another kind of hook to get their interest
“I would like to start with a story/ a funny joke.”	Just start telling your story or your joke
“Sorry/ excuse me if I seem nervous/ I’m not good at public speaking.”	If you get nervous, or start having technical problems, take a moment. Nerves are generally not as visible as you think.
“Talk about,” used repeatedly or monotonously. (i.e. “First, I’ll talk about competition. Then, I’ll talk about Darwin. Then, I’ll talk about Finches.”)	Any phrase used repeatedly in this way is going to grate on your audience's ears. Mix up your language, use different words and phrases.
“Bear with me.”	Run through your presentation beforehand, using the same technology, so that you don’t get caught off guard.
“Sorry, let me rephrase.”	Use language simple enough or reorganizing your presentation so that you don’t have to; you want them to be with you the entire time.

Instead of....	Try...
“The next slide shows/ moving right along...”	You want to find more organic transitions in your presentation, rather than having to force it.
“I know this slide is really busy,”	Make your slides as clean as possible and circle the parts you want your audience to notice in red. Point to those and explain.
“I think I’ve bored you enough/ I didn’t have enough time/ That’s all I have.”	These examples of poorly planned out conclusions leave your audience without a sense of closure. You want to leave your audience with memorable last thoughts on your presentation.
“Um/uh/you know.”	Instead of using filler words, take a moment to collect your thoughts. Your audience won’t notice the pause, but you will sound much more put together.