



The Speech Delivery Toolkit.

Voice, eye contact, gestures and memory techniques in one practical guide. Each tool comes with a drill you can do at home in five to ten minutes.

Voice: five dials

Think of your voice as having five dials. Most nervous speakers leave all five at one setting. Turn them on purpose.

DIAL	WHAT IT DOES	QUICK DRILL
Volume	Reaches the back of the room	Say one sentence to a wall across the room
Pace	Controls understanding	Read a paragraph slow, normal, fast, then pick
Pitch	Adds emotion	Say 'really' as a question, a fact, a joke
Pause	Lets ideas land	Mark three pauses in a paragraph and hold them
Tone	Signals attitude	Say one line warm, serious, curious

Breathe from the belly: place a hand on your stomach, inhale so it moves out, then speak on a slow exhale.

Eye contact

Eye contact tells the audience you mean what you say. Speak to one person for a full thought, then move to another. In a small room, divide the audience into three zones: left, center, right.

- 1 Pick three spots in the room (or three people).
- 2 Deliver one full sentence to spot one.
- 3 Move to spot two for the next sentence.
- 4 Do not dart; land and finish the thought.
- 5 If eye contact feels hard, look at the middle of the audience or just above heads, and keep your face lifted toward the room.

Gestures and stance

- ♦ Start in a balanced stance, feet about shoulder width.
- ♦ Let hands rest at your sides between gestures.
- ♦ Make gestures bigger than feels natural; they look smaller from a distance.
- ♦ Match the gesture to the idea: counting points, showing size, inviting the audience.
- ♦ Move with purpose, such as stepping to a new spot when you change topics.
- ♦ Avoid swaying, pacing and playing with clothes or hair.

Mirror drill

Record a 60-second clip. Watch it once with the sound off. Do your hands and body show the ideas, or distract from them?

Memorization methods

Memorized events (such as oratory and informative at NSDA tournaments, and declamation in many leagues) are easier when you learn meaning first, words second.

METHOD	HOW
Chunking	Learn 3 to 4 sentences at a time, then link chunks
Backward build	Learn the last chunk first so you always speed toward the end
Walk and talk	Pair each section with a place in the room or a movement
Record and listen	Play your own audio on walks or rides
Idea map	Draw one picture per section and recall in order
Spaced practice	Short sessions over many days beat one long cram

If you lose your place: pause, breathe, restate your last point in your own words, and move on. Judges rarely notice a calm recovery.

Weekly practice schedule

DAY	FOCUS (10 TO 15 MINUTES)
Mon	Voice dials drill
Tue	Memorize one new chunk
Wed	Eye contact zones
Thu	Gesture pass with mirror
Fri	Full run for a family member
Sat	Record and review one run
Sun	Rest or light read-through

Want feedback from a coach? Book a free consultation at the link below.

Built from public guidance: NSDA High School Unified Manual (speechanddebate.org) · NSDA competition event pages (speechanddebate.org). Rules change by league and tournament, so always confirm against your tournament invitation and current league rules.

NOTES

Want a plan built around **your** debater?

Book a free consultation. The short intake takes about a minute and opens right away.

BOOK NOW →