

CONFIDENCE AND ADAPTABILITY

Public speaking can feel intimidating, especially when there's little time to prepare. Strong leaders learn to think on their feet, adapt, and communicate with confidence in any situation. Whether giving a planned speech or responding at the moment, adaptability and self-assurance help speakers stay clear, composed, and effective. In this activity, you'll practice both prepared and spontaneous speaking, learning how to stay calm and engaging no matter the circumstances.



Conversation Starter: Why do people feel nervous about public speaking? What makes a speaker engaging and memorable?

PRESENTING ON THE SPOT

Spontaneous Presentations:

1. Form groups of four.
2. One person volunteers to present while the other three each secretly select one of the following:
 - a. A prompt (e.g., "Why everyone should know basic first aid")
 - b. A picture (e.g., a rocket, a puppy, a flower)
 - c. A quote (e.g., "Be the change that you wish to see in the world." – Mahatma Gandhi)
3. Now, the challenge begins!
 - a. The speaker starts with only the prompt and speaks for 30 seconds.
 - b. After 30 seconds, the picture is revealed—the speaker must creatively tie it into their speech.
 - c. Near the end, the quote is revealed—the speaker must connect it to their conclusion.
 - d. Each speech lasts about one minute.
4. If there is time, switch roles. This time, the new presenter will receive all three elements (prompt, picture, and quote) at the start and have one minute to prepare before speaking.
5. Compare: How did extra preparation time affect confidence and clarity?

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Develop confidence in both prepared and spontaneous speaking.
- Learn how to adapt messages on the spot.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- Prompts, images, and quotes (see Appendix)
- Scissors to cut them apart

FACILITATION TIPS

- Focus on building confidence, not perfection.
- Encourage participants to have fun with the challenge.

REFLECTION

- What did you learn about thinking on your feet?
- How did adapting mid-speech impact your confidence?

CHECK UNDERSTANDING

Did participants recognize how preparation impacts their speaking skills? Did they practice staying adaptable and confident in unexpected situations?

APPLICATIONS

- When have you had to speak with little time to prepare? What strategies helped?
- What strategies help you stay calm and confident when speaking unexpectedly?

DIVE DEEPER: Why do some people seem naturally confident in speaking, and how can others build that skill?

KEY TAKEAWAY: Confidence and adaptability are just as important as preparation in leadership and communication. Learning to think on your feet while staying clear and engaging will help you in any speaking situation.

