

READING A SPEECH

Whilst reading a speech means you don't have the problem of memorising or working from notes, it does present a speaker with one major issue.

If you have your eyes entirely focussed on the text, you are cutting yourself off from your audience because reading your text reduces the eye contact you can have with your audience.

However, there are techniques, simple and easy to use, which will enable the speaker/reader to deliver their speech message clearly, effectively and still maintain eye contact.

You need to prepare your text for reading out loud. A text that's laid out for you to read silently to yourself will not necessarily work when you try to read it out loud.

PREPARING THE TEXT ON THE PAGE

1. Keep paragraphs short and leave plenty of space between them.
2. Three paragraphs per page: no more.
3. Use only the top half of each page. This will prevent you dropping your head too much, which will break eye contact with your audience and can muffle your voice.
4. Use a large font, say size 16, to make reading as easy as possible.
5. Put keywords, or important phrases in a bigger font and different colour.
6. When using slides, put the Slide Numbers Into your text.
7. Number the pages with large easily read figures.
8. Don't laminate the pages or slip them into clear plastic covers when you come to read them. The lighting may reflect off the shiny material and make reading more difficult.

MAINTAINING EYE CONTACT WITH AN AUDIENCE WHEN READING.

The preparation you have done will help you maintain eye contact with your audience.

1. Marking the text with a red forward slash / at the points where you want to look up at your audience gives you clear your visual cues.
2. When you return to the text, the different colours used for each paragraph will help you find your place.
3. Using only the top half of each page will also make finding your place easier.

ON THE PLATFORM

1. If you have a lectern, you can leave your pages unstapled and slide the top page to the left as you finish reading from it.
2. If there is no lectern, staple your pages together and hold them in your hand.
3. Hold them up at about shoulder level, so your head stays up, your eyes visible, ready to engage with your audience.
4. Maintain eye contact with your audience. Do this at the points you have indicated in the text.
5. The large font will enable you to hold the pages away from your head so it doesn't obscure your eyes from the audience.