

# How to be a Better Speaker in the Classroom

**"There are only two types of speakers in the world. 1. The nervous and 2. The Liars."** ~Mark Twain,  
American Writer

Learning how to speak English is difficult.

Learning how to speak English in front of other people is even more difficult.

The situation becomes worse when you are being judged or given a score for your performance.

What type of speaker are you?

- nervous?
- relaxed?
- confident?
- confused?
- clear?
- hesitant?
- quiet?
- shy?
- persuasive?
- courageous?
- gifted?
- convincing?
- careless?
- fearful?
- authentic?
- natural?
- spontaneous?





## Sample Answers

- I'm a confident speaker and I have no trouble speaking in front of everyone in the classroom.
- I'm a shy speaker and I get really nervous when I have to talk in class.
- I am courageous and spontaneous when it comes to speaking in front of an audience. I am not afraid at all.
- People say that I am a careless speaker. I don't understand why they say that.

- I am a persuasive and convincing speaker. I always manage to send my message across to the targeted audience.
- I wish I could become a better speaker in the classroom because I'm often confused when I have to explain something to my classmates and teachers.
- I'm a gifted and natural speaker. I have no stage fright.

**Your Turn:** Define what type of speaker you are in at least two sentences and record yourself using your mobile phone.

## Different Types of Speakers in the Classroom

			
Good Brave Witty Relaxed Eloquent Interesting Believable Trustworthy Natural Spontaneous Well-rehearsed Gifted Effective	Shy Nervous Fidgety Quiet Embarrassed Average Confused Indifferent Distant Untrustworthy Incoherent Inarticulate Careless	Excellent ★ Powerful Enthusiastic Articulate Inspirational Motivational ★ Brilliant Passionate Fiery ★ Authentic Persuasive Engaging Confident	Fearful Frightened Vulnerable Emotionless Crude Offensive Vacuous Mindless Unintelligible Muddled Anxious Unremarkable Lousy

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## How to Be a Better Speaker in the Classroom: Step One-Definitions

Let's start with a few definitions first.

### Speak:

- To express thoughts, feelings or opinions orally.
- To talk in a language.
- To say something or utter words in order to convey information.

## **Talk:**

- To speak in order to give information.
- To converse or communicate orally.
- To have a discussion or conversation with someone.

## **Speaker:**

- A person who speaks or talks.
- A piece of electrical equipment which we can use to hear recorded or broadcast sound.

## **The difference between Speak and Talk**

- With **Speak**, we pay more attention to the person who is uttering the words. This can be a monologue.
- With **Talk**, we are dealing with a person who is giving information or expressing his or her thoughts to one or more people. This can be a dialogue.

In the classroom, the teacher is often the main speaker. In the English classroom, it is preferable that the students speak most of the time.

## **But they don't. Why?**

- Because they are nervous.
- Because they feel they don't know the answer to the question that the teacher has asked.
- Because they think there is only one answer to the question.
- Because they lack confidence in general.
- Because they do not want to be embarrassed by their classmates.
- Because they are not interested in the subject.
- Because they think their accent is awful.
- Because they think that it is ridiculous to talk in a foreign language.
- Because they really struggle to speak English.
- Because they lack vocabulary and basic structures to form their own sentences and use language autonomously.
- Because the teacher loves talking and does not give students the opportunity to speak.

In general, students speak more in a classroom where there is a collaborative, nurturing and cooperative atmosphere.

## How to Be a Better Speaker in the Classroom: Step Two-Conditions for Success

How can you go beyond the usual nervousness, fear, ignorance and apathy in order to become an active and productive speaker in the classroom?

### First Things First: Use Polite Language

It is always nice to have a classroom where students and teachers respect each other.

Generally, you will love speaking and you will feel like you are playing an important role in the classroom if you have your classmates' or teacher's interests at heart.

If you are genuinely interested in your classmates' or teacher's welfare, it will be easier to have conversations. English will just be a tool or an instrument for your dialogues or collaboration.

## How to Use Polite Language in the Classroom

### GREETINGS

- ✓ Good morning, teacher. How are you today?
- ✓ Good afternoon, George. How are you feeling today?
- ✓ Hi Mary! I'm so happy to see you. You've been absent for a week.
- ✓ Hello, everybody. I'm very excited to start the lesson today.
- ✓ What's up guys?

### INTERACTING WITH OTHERS

- ✓ Thank you, that's very kind of you.
- ✓ Thanks, that's very nice of you.
- ✓ I'm sorry to be late.
- ✓ I am sorry, I was unable to do the homework yesterday, but I will do it today.
- ✓ No, thank you. I am doing something else this afternoon.
- ✓ No, thanks. That was nice anyway.

### ASKING FOR SOMETHING

- ✓ Can I borrow your pencil, please?
- ✓ Can you give me back my pencil, please?
- ✓ Could you have a look at these exercises, please?
- ✓ May I go to the toilet, teacher?
- ✓ Can I open the window?
- ✓ I would like to write today's date on the board.

### SAYING GOODBYE

- ✓ Goodbye, everyone. See you tomorrow.
- ✓ Goodbye, until later!
- ✓ Bye!
- ✓ Bye-bye! It was nice to see you today.
- ✓ See you later!
- ✓ Have a nice day.
- ✓ See you!

## How to be a Better Speaker in the Classroom: Sample Conversation

**George:** Good morning, Jane. How are you today?

**Jane:** Good morning, George. I'm fine, thank you. What about you?

**George:** I'm all right. Did you do your English homework?

**Jane:** Oh, can you remind me which homework we were supposed to do?

**George:** We were supposed to write three paragraphs in which we described our house.

**Jane:** Oh, yes, I remember now! Thank you for reminding me.

**George:** You're welcome.

**Jane:** Yes, I did it the day before yesterday. It was a bit difficult but I managed to do it without help.

**George:** That's nice. I agree with you that it wasn't that difficult. Well, I think that the teacher will be here in a minute. So, talk to you later at break time!

**Jane:** See you!

**Your Turn:** Can you imagine a dialogue in which two students use polite language? You can practise with a classmate or someone who is willing to speak English with you. Record yourselves using a mobile phone.

Help: You have more **Polite Vocabulary** [here](#).

### **Practise, practise and practise**

You only have a few hours of English per week. Take advantage of these precious minutes in order to improve your spoken language.

#### **Tips**

- Set yourself daily, weekly and monthly goals. You can say: Today, I will speak at least twice in the classroom. Give yourself a reward after you have succeeded.
- Set yourself higher standards. You can say: I want to learn how to speak English because I would like to go to an English-speaking country one day.

- Have some ready-made sentences that you can use. Gradually, you will start making sentences of your own.
- Give suggestions to your English teacher about subjects that you like. You will be more comfortable speaking about the things you know already.
- Watch series or films on Netflix with subtitles and imitate your favourite actors. Your accent will get better and better.
- If you are afraid of making grammatical mistakes in front of everyone, try putting your ideas on paper before you speak. Soon, you will be talking without the help of this piece of paper as you become more and more confident.
- When the classroom environment is not encouraging enough, try to focus on people who will give you positive feedback and ignore classmates who laugh, criticise or simply undermine your efforts.
- We all have an opinion to share on different subjects. Do not be shy to say what you think about subjects that you are familiar with.



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For more vocabulary **Expressing Opinions**, look [here](#).

Below are a few more sentences that you can use in the classroom.

## **ASKING FOR CLARIFICATION**

- What do you mean when you say...?
- What do you mean by that?
- What were you trying to say?
- Can you rephrase that?
- Can you repeat what you just said?
- Can you explain why...?
- Is it true that...?
- Can you say that in a different way?
- I'm not sure, I understand. Can you say that again?
- It would be nice if you would give us a few examples.
- Do you mean...?
- Did you mean...?

## **CONTRIBUTING TO A DISCUSSION**

- I would like to say that...
- In my opinion, ...
- As far as I am concerned, this is..
- I think that...
- This is a controversial subject, but I believe that...
- I agree with Jane. We could...
- I don't agree with George. Generally speaking...
- In my humble opinion...
- I am not really familiar with this subject, but I think that...
- I strongly believe that...
- George said that...and I would like to add that...
- I have understood your different points of view. let me add my own.
- To sum up, I think that...

## How to be a Better Speaker in the Classroom: Sample Discussion in the Classroom

**Teacher:** Today, we are going to talk about the internet. What do you think about this modern technology?

**George:** I think that it is very useful and we cannot do without it nowadays.

**Jane:** I agree with George. The internet is very practical. I cannot even imagine a world without the internet. I would just go crazy. Just imagine, no Instagram, no Facebook, no YouTube. Gosh, I would go crazy.

**Clare:** I beg to differ on this point Jane. Instagram is not that necessary. In the 90s, people did not have Instagram and they survived.

**George:** That is true Clare, but in my opinion, we cannot compare the needs of the past to those of the present. Our times are different.

**Clare:** What do you mean by 'Our times are different'? We live on the same planet: 'earth'.

**Teacher:** Let me clarify that for you, Clare, if you don't mind. I think George wants to say that we live in different times. The 90s were in the twentieth century where there was no Internet and now we live in the twenty-first century where the internet is very present in our lives. These are different periods in our history.

**Clare:** I see what you mean, teacher. Thank you for your explanation. Nevertheless, I strongly believe that we can do without the internet. In the past people survived without this modern technology.

**Jane:** Can I just add something? I understand your point of view Clare. The internet might not seem so indispensable to you but to others it is. This is where some people get their news, socialise, do their shopping and consult their administrative documents. The world would come to an end for such people if the internet no longer existed.

**Clare:** Oh, I get it Jane. Another person's medicine might be another person's poison. We all have different tastes and it is important to respect that.

**Your Turn:** Imagine a discussion in which class members talk about something. Be creative and use the vocabulary you have just seen.



## Last Tips: For Students

- Wait for your turn before you speak.
- Speak louder.
- Speak in a clear voice.
- Listen to others when they are speaking.
- Do not make fun of someone when he or she is speaking. That is rude.
- Be relevant.
- Stick to the point.
- Avoid using hurtful language.
- Each person has a right to his or her own opinion. Please, respect it.
- Enjoy yourself most of all.

## Last Tips For Teachers

- Create projects in the classroom to encourage collaboration.
- Use a conversational tone.
- Avoid yelling at students.
- Avoid demeaning students.
- Make sure that the tasks that you give are doable to avoid unnecessary frustration. Try doing them yourself in the same conditions.
- Give praise where it is due.
- Create a safe and nurturing environment in the classroom.
- Provide interesting subjects that will engage your students.
- Put routines and strict guidelines into place before allowing freedom.
- Enjoy yourself.



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