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## Tips

Most people have apprehension about speaking in public. Your class, however, is a friendly and supportive place to learn. Here are some ideas:

- Prepare for oral-communication activities thoroughly.
- Focus on your message, but don't forget about your audience.
- Use visual aids to help you stay on message and to give the audience something besides you to focus on.
- Try to speak about a topic that you know well.

## Online resources

- **UHM General Education**  
[www.hawaii.edu/gened/oc/oc.htm#teaching](http://www.hawaii.edu/gened/oc/oc.htm#teaching)  
This site contains basic steps for a successful presentation.
- **Study Guides and Strategies**  
[www.studygs.net/speaking.htm](http://www.studygs.net/speaking.htm)  
This site offers a lot of ideas for public speaking in an educational setting.

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# ORAL COMMUNICATION AND O FOCUS COURSES

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## Information for Students



## What are Oral Communication courses?

Oral communication skills benefit students academically, interpersonally, and in their future careers. Oral Communication (O) Focus classes will help you to develop your oral competencies as well as understand course content through structured discussions.

These courses will give you specific training in oral communication techniques, through assignments that may vary considerably from course to course. Students generally find that O Focus classes are interactive and foster broad participation among students with different backgrounds.

## O Focus requirement

You have to complete one Oral Communication (O) Focus course at Mānoa to graduate. Courses are only available at the 300- and 400-level. Each course is limited to twenty to thirty students.



## How can I prepare for an oral presentation?

### 1. Determine purpose.

A general purpose may be to inform, persuade, or entertain. A specific purpose may be to present a narrowly focused point or to give a comprehensive overview of a topic.

### 2. Analyze audience.

You should know the knowledge level of the audience as well as members' general attitude and some basic demographic information. This will help you refine and relate your talk, especially by anticipating questions and building answers into your presentation.

### 3. Research topic.

Unless you are already an expert, you need to do some research. Remember to keep track of sources and cite the important ones. Citations can add power to your words.

### 4. Organize.

Establish the relationship between main points so that your audience can follow you.

### 5. Prepare visual aids.

Visual aids can enhance a presentation, help establish your credibility, and make it easier for an audience to follow your ideas. Don't leave these until the last minute.

### 6. Rehearse.

Rehearsal is a valuable tool that is often overlooked. It can be done alone or with friends. Pay attention to allotted time.

## How can I improve my oral skills?

After each presentation or discussion, answer the following:

- What single thing did I do well?
- What single thing could I change for next time?
- What do I need more help with?
- Did I do enough research and demonstrate a clear understanding of the topic?
- Was I sufficiently organized? Was I overly anxious?
- Were handouts written clearly and integrated with the presentation?
- Did I effectively use eye contact, gestures and movement?
- Did I rehearse enough?

It helps to answer the self-evaluative questions to pinpoint your strengths and weaknesses. Your instructor will also be able to advise and help you in these areas to improve your oral competencies for subsequent oral communication assignments.