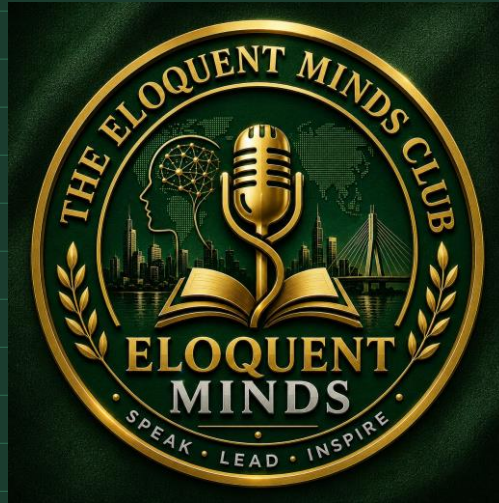




ELOQUENT MINDS CLUB

A Toastmasters-Inspired Public Speaking & Leadership Club

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Introduction to public speaking

Get ready with public speaking

AUTHOR: YUSUPHU AWADHI LEMA

Institute of Finance Management (IFM)
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

SPEAK • LEAD • INSPIRE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1 — The Art of Public Speaking

What it is, why it matters, how to start

Chapter 2 — Structuring Your Speech

Opening, body, conclusion — every time

Chapter 3 — Vocal Variety & Body Language

The non-verbal layer of communication

Chapter 4 — Stage Fright & Confidence

Turning fear into fuel

Chapter 5 — Debate & Argumentation

Building and defending your ideas

Chapter 1

THE ART OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

What it is, why it matters, how to start

1.1 What Is Public Speaking?

Public speaking is the deliberate act of communicating a message to an audience with clarity, confidence, and intentional impact. It is one of the oldest and most studied human skills — from the orations of Cicero in ancient Rome to the TED talks that now reach millions of people across the globe.

At its core, public speaking is not about performance. It is about transfer — transferring an idea, an emotion, a call to action, or a piece of knowledge from your mind to the minds of those listening. When that transfer succeeds, something remarkable happens: people change. They think differently, feel differently, act differently.

1.2 Why It Matters More Than Ever

In the 21st-century professional landscape — especially across African economies experiencing rapid growth — the ability to communicate persuasively is a rare and enormously valuable asset. Employers consistently rank communication as the number one soft skill they cannot find in graduates.

1.3 The Three Levels of a Speaker

Every speaker you will ever encounter — from a nervous first-timer to a seasoned keynote presenter — sits somewhere on the following three-level spectrum. Understanding where you are is the first step toward moving up.



Level	Characteristics	Primary Goal
Level 1: Surviving	Nervous, reads from notes, little eye contact, monotone voice, avoids the stage	To get through the speech without disaster
Level 2: Communicating	Organised structure, some eye contact, basic vocal variety, manages nerves	To deliver the message clearly and completely
Level 3: Inspiring	Commands the stage, connects emotionally, speaks without notes, moves audiences to action	To change how people think, feel, or act

1.4 Getting Started — Your First 30 Days

The path to becoming a confident, compelling speaker begins with a single commitment: to show up and try. Below is your action map for the first 30 days of your speaking journey.

1	Day 1 Attend your first Eloquent Minds meeting as a guest. Observe everything. Take notes on what good speakers do.
2	Day 3 Join the club formally. Complete your membership application and meet your assigned mentor.
3	Week 2 Attend the New Member Orientation with the VP Education. Learn the club structure and your speaking pathway.
4	Week 3 Write your first speech: The Icebreaker. 4–6 minutes about yourself. No agenda other than to stand and speak.
5	Day 30 Deliver your Icebreaker before the full club. This is your most important milestone. The club will cheer for you.

1.5 Common Mistakes Beginners Make

Knowing what to avoid is as important as knowing what to do. The following comparison is based on observations from thousands of first-time speakers.

DO ✓

- Prepare and practise at least 3 times before the meeting
- Make genuine eye contact with individuals in the audience
- Use pauses deliberately — silence is powerful
- Tell a personal story to open your speech
- Breathe deeply and slowly before walking to the lectern

DON'T ✗

- Read word-for-word from a printed script or phone
- Apologise at the start: 'Sorry, I'm nervous...'
- Fill silence with 'um', 'ah', 'like', 'you know'
- Pace or sway nervously without purpose
- Rush through the speech just to finish

NOTE: The single most common reason people never improve at public speaking is that they only speak when they feel ready. You will never feel ready. The Eloquent Minds motto: Do it afraid.

Chapter 2

STRUCTURING YOUR SPEECH

Opening, body, conclusion — every time, without exception

2.1 The Golden Rule of Speech Structure

Every speech, regardless of length or topic, follows the same non-negotiable architecture: a strong opening, a clear body with supporting points, and a powerful close. Speakers who skip this structure are the ones audiences forget. Speakers who master it are the ones audiences quote.

2.2 The Opening — Your First 30 Seconds

The first 30 seconds of any speech are the most important. In that window, your audience decides whether they will listen or mentally leave the room. You must earn their attention before you deserve it.

The Five Proven Opening Techniques:

1. **The Bold Statement** — Start with a surprising fact or claim. 'By 2030, 85% of the jobs that will exist today do not yet exist.'
2. **The Personal Story** — Open with a vivid 60-second anecdote that connects to your message.
3. **The Rhetorical Question** — Ask something the audience cannot answer immediately. 'When was the last time you were truly listened to?'
4. **The Dramatic Pause** — Walk to the lectern. Look at the audience. Say nothing for 3 seconds. Then begin.

5. The Provocative Quote — Open with a powerful quote that frames the entire speech.

2.3 The Body — Three Is the Magic Number

The body of your speech should contain exactly three main points. Not two. Not five. Three. This is not an arbitrary rule — it is rooted in cognitive psychology. The human brain organises information in groups of three. Lists of three feel complete, balanced, and memorable.

TIP: For every main point in your speech, use the PEEL structure: Point → Explain → Evidence → Link back to your message. This ensures no point is left hanging without support.

2.4 The Closing — Make It Unforgettable

The closing is the last thing your audience hears, and therefore the thing they are most likely to remember. Never close with 'That's all I have' or 'Thank you for listening.' These closings signal that the speech just stopped — they don't signal that it ended.

Checklist for a Powerful Closing:

- Summarise your three main points in one sentence each
- Return to your opening story, quote, or question and close the loop
- Deliver your call to action — what do you want the audience to DO?
- End with a memorable final line you have rehearsed and memorised
- Pause after your last word. Nod. Return to your seat.

2.5 Speech Structure Cheat Sheet

Section	% of Total Time	Key Question to Answer	Length (7-min speech)
Opening	15%	Why should they listen to me right now?	~1 min
Main Point 1	25%	What is my first key idea, and what proves it?	~1:45 min
Main Point 2	25%	What is my second key idea, and what proves it?	~1:45 min
Main Point 3	20%	What is my third key idea, and what proves it?	~1:25 min



Closing	15%	What do I want them to remember and do?	~1 min
---------	-----	---	--------

IMPORTANT: Never write a script and memorise it word-for-word. If you forget one word, your entire speech collapses. Instead, memorise your structure and key phrases, and speak the rest naturally from deep familiarity with your content.

Chapter 3

VOCAL VARIETY & BODY LANGUAGE

The non-verbal layer that audiences feel before they hear

3.1 The 7-38-55 Rule

In 1971, psychologist Albert Mehrabian published research showing that in emotional communication, the impact of a message is determined 7% by the words spoken, 38% by vocal tone, and 55% by body language. While this ratio applies specifically to emotional contexts, the underlying insight is undeniable: your audience reads your body and hears your voice long before your words register.

3.2 The Four Dimensions of Vocal Variety

Dimension	What It Means	How to Use It	Common Mistake
PACE	How fast or slow you speak	Slow down for emphasis. Speed up to build excitement.	Speaking too fast throughout — often driven by nerves.
PITCH	How high or low your voice goes	Raise pitch for questions; lower pitch for authority.	Monotone delivery — same pitch from start to finish.

PAUSE	Strategic silence between words or sentences	Pause for 2–3 seconds after a key statement. Let it land.	Filling every pause with 'um' or 'ah' out of discomfort.
POWER	Volume — how loud or soft you speak	Drop to a near-whisper for intimacy; boom for impact.	Speaking at the same volume the entire speech.

3.3 Body Language Mastery

Your body is a communication instrument. Every gesture, every step, every facial expression either reinforces or contradicts your spoken message. The audience will always believe your body over your words.

The Five Body Language Fundamentals:

1. Posture

Stand tall. Feet shoulder-width apart. Weight balanced on both feet. This posture physiologically signals confidence to both the audience and to yourself.

2. Eye Contact

Look at individuals, not the wall. Hold eye contact for a full sentence before moving to the next person. This creates connection.

3. Gestures

Use purposeful hand gestures to illustrate your points. Open palms signal honesty. Pointing at the audience creates accusation — avoid it.

4. Movement

Move with intention, not nervousness. Step toward the audience when making a key point. Step back when asking a reflective question.

5. Facial Expression

Your face must match your words. If you are telling a joyful story with a blank face, your audience feels the disconnect immediately.

TIP: Record yourself on video at least once before a major speech. Watch it with the sound off first — you will discover habits you never knew you had. Then watch it with your eyes closed and focus only on your voice.

Chapter 4

STAGE FRIGHT & CONFIDENCE

Turning fear into fuel — the psychology of the stage

4.1 The Neuroscience of Stage Fright

Stage fright is not a character flaw or a sign of weakness. It is a perfectly rational biological response to perceived social threat. When you stand before an audience, your brain's amygdala registers dozens of eyes fixed on you and triggers a mild fight-or-flight response — exactly the same mechanism that once helped our ancestors survive predators. The physical symptoms you feel: racing heart, dry mouth, shaking hands, shallow breathing — are simply adrenaline being released into your bloodstream. Your job is not to eliminate this response, but to channel it.

4.2 Reframing Anxiety as Excitement

Research by Alison Wood Brooks at Harvard Business School found that saying 'I am excited' before a high-stakes performance leads to significantly better outcomes than trying to calm down. Anxiety and excitement are physiologically near-identical states. The difference is only in the story you tell yourself about the physical sensations you are experiencing.

NOTE: Before your next speech, try this: take three deep breaths, then say aloud or in your head, 'I am excited. My body is preparing me to perform at my best.' Watch what happens to your energy on stage.

4.3 Confidence-Building Checklist

- Prepare thoroughly — confidence is earned through preparation, not talent
- Practise in front of at least one real person before the meeting
- Arrive 15 minutes early to walk the stage and own the space
- Use the 'power pose' for 2 minutes before speaking (proven to raise testosterone)
- Remind yourself: the audience wants you to succeed — they are on your side
- Focus on the message, not on yourself — service over self-consciousness



Chapter 5

DEBATE & ARGUMENTATION

Building, structuring and defending ideas under pressure

5.1 What Makes a Winning Argument

Debate is not about winning at all costs — it is about the rigorous pursuit of truth through structured intellectual combat. A winning argument is not the loudest, the most aggressive, or the most emotional. It is the one that is most logically sound, most evidentially supported, and most directly responsive to the opposition's strongest points.

5.2 The PEEL Argument Framework

Every argument you construct — whether in a formal debate, a boardroom presentation, or a conversation with a sceptical audience — should follow the PEEL structure.

Element	What It Means	Example
P — Point	State your claim clearly in one sentence	'Mandatory public speaking training in universities reduces graduate unemployment.'
E — Explain	Explain the logic behind your claim	'Communication is the most cited skills gap in employer surveys across East Africa.'

E — Evidence	Cite a fact, statistic, study, or credible example	'According to the ILO 2024 report, 67% of Tanzanian SME owners cite poor communication as a barrier to growth.'
L — Link	Connect your evidence back to the debate motion	'Therefore, universities that train communication skills directly address the employability crisis.'

5.3 Rebuttal Techniques

The ability to rebut — to respond to an opponent's argument immediately, clearly, and persuasively — is the mark of an advanced debater. Use these four techniques in any order as the situation demands.

- 1. Turn the Argument:** Accept the opponent's evidence but show it actually supports YOUR position.
- 2. Challenge the Evidence:** Question the source, date, methodology, or relevance of the evidence cited.
- 3. Draw the Distinction:** Agree in part but show that the specific case being debated is fundamentally different.
- 4. Minimise the Impact:** Accept the point but argue it is too small or too rare to change the overall conclusion.

IMPORTANT: The single biggest mistake in debate is attacking the person instead of the argument. Personal attacks are called 'ad hominem' fallacies and immediately signal to the judges that you have run out of intellectual ammunition. Stay on the argument — always.

This is a living document. It grows as you grow. Return to it after every speech and mark what you have mastered.

Eloquent Minds Club • Founded by Yusuphu Awadhi Lema • Institute of Finance Management (IFM) • Est. 2026