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Public Speaking

Lesson	CEFR
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Speaking

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Introduction

Glossophobia, the technical term for the fear of public speaking; consistently ranks as one of humanity's most common anxieties, often placing higher than the fear of heights, spiders, or even death. Whether standing on a physical stage in front of hundreds of people or staring at a gallery of silent, black boxes on a corporate Zoom call, speaking in front of an audience triggers a primal "fight-or-flight" response. This reaction can paralyze even the most competent professionals.



Vocabulary Focus

Glossophobia: An abnormal or severe fear of public speaking.

Stage Fright: Nervousness or anxiety felt before or during a performance or speech in front of an audience.

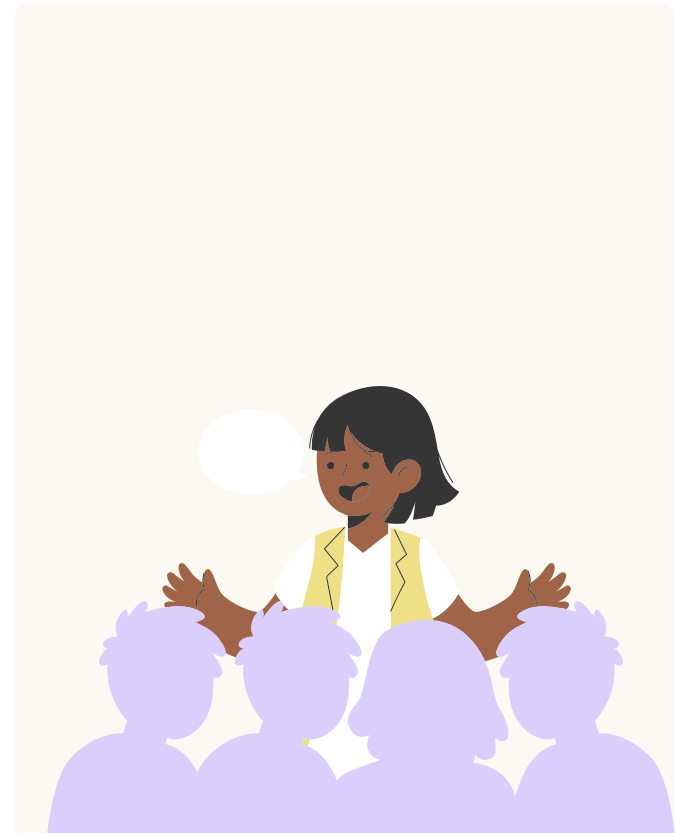


Vocabulary Focus

Deafening Silence: An idiom used to describe a striking, uncomfortable, or heavy silence, often occurring when an audience fails to respond to a speaker.

Impromptu: Something done, spoken, or composed without any prior preparation or planning.

Unmute: To turn on a microphone, particularly during a virtual video conference, to allow others to hear you speak.



From the Stage to the Screen

For decades, public speaking meant gripping a physical podium, sweating under stage lights, and making eye contact with a room full of people. Tutors taught speakers to manage their stage fright by focusing on their posture, controlling their breathing, and projecting their voice to the back of the auditorium.

However, the modern digital era has introduced a brand new psychological monster: virtual presentation anxiety. Delivering an impromptu update or pitching a slide deck over platforms like Zoom or Microsoft Teams presents unique challenges. Presenters often have to speak into a tiny camera lens while navigating a deafening silence, unable to read the room's body language or gauge audience engagement. When a manager says, "Please unmute yourself and take us through the data," the physical symptoms of glossophobia—racing heart, dry mouth, and shaking hands—can hit just as hard through a computer screen as they do on a physical stage.

Let's Discuss!

Round1: Personal Horror Stories & Triumphs

- On a scale of 1 to 10 (1 being completely calm, 10 being absolutely terrified), how do you feel right before you have to give a presentation or speak up in a large meeting?
- Share a public speaking "horror story" from your past. Have you ever forgotten your words, experienced a technical malfunction, or been met with a deafening silence? How did you survive it?
- Do you find it more intimidating to speak to a live audience in a crowded room, or to give a presentation on a Zoom call where everyone's cameras are turned off? Why?

Let's Discuss!

Round 2: Tips, Tricks, and Coping Mechanisms

- What is your personal strategy for calming your nerves right before you have to unmute yourself or step onto a stage?
- Some people practice their speeches in front of a mirror, while others record themselves on their phones. What do you think is the absolute best way to prepare for an important presentation?
- If a colleague panicked and froze completely layout-wise during an impromptu speech at work, what could you do as an audience member to help them feel supported?

The Impromptu Challenge Arena

Select a topic. You have 30 seconds to think, then you must speak continuously for 60 seconds!

Topic 1: Defend why your favorite food is objectively the greatest meal on planet Earth.

Topic 2: Give an emergency sales pitch for a useless object on your desk right now (e.g., a broken pen, a coffee mug, a paperclip).

Topic 3: Explain the rules of your favorite sport or hobby to someone who has lived under a rock their entire life.

Topic 4: Convince the audience that alien life definitely exists and that they are already living among us.