

TIPS ON PREPARING FOR YOUR EXAM

HINTS AND TIPS FOR COMMUNICATION SKILLS EXAMS

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

We've put together a series of tips to help you get ready for your Communication Skills exam.

PLANNING

Effective planning is an important skill for all areas of life, but it is particularly relevant in order to feel prepared and confident in the exam room.

Tips:

- Use language appropriate to the scenario of the task
- Think carefully about your audience and how you can tailor your content to engage them
- Quiz yourself in advance with practice questions, but make sure you listen actively during the discussion element
- Consider your non-verbal communication as well as the content of your discussions and speeches
- Make sure you have checked any technology you are using beforehand
- Don't let nerves paralyse you - the examiner wants to hear what you've got to say. Some nerves are good. The adrenaline rush that makes you sweat also makes you more alert and ready to give your best performance.

PUBLIC SPEAKING

Public speaking is routinely described as one of the greatest (and most common) fears, but there are many ways to tackle anxiety and learn to deliver a memorable speech.

Tips:

- Ownership of the material and a sense of spontaneity are key to effective and confident communication



- Be as familiar as you can with the material but do not learn all your speeches word for word. Reading from a script or slide fractures the interpersonal connection. The examiner is not testing your skill at reading aloud or memorising. You may use prompt cards, not a full script
- As the grades progress talks are expected to be more formal and should be structured with a clear introduction and convincing argument and should finish with a conclusion that summarises the main points.

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NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Albert Mehrabian developed a communication model, in which he demonstrated that only 7% of what we communicate consists of the literal content of the message. The use of one's voice, such as tone, intonation and volume, take up 38% and as much as 55% of communication consists of body language. Although Mehrabian's theory can be argued the importance of vocal skills and body language in conveying a message should not be dismissed.

Tips:

- Think about how you can use your tone of voice to enhance meaning
- Eye contact and gesture are ways to include audiences
- Use visual aids sparingly. Too many can break the direct connection to the audience. They should enhance or clarify your content and maintain your audience's attention, rather than create a distraction.



DISCUSSION

Most talks and presentations are followed by the examiner asking a few questions or engaging the candidate in discussion in order to test the candidates' understanding of their subject matter.

Tips:

- Be prepared to defend your opinions
- Consider possible objections/reservations/challenges as part of your preparation
- As the grades progress candidates should also be able to identify the communications skills they are using and reflect on their impact.

FURTHER SUPPORT FOR COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS

To access a range of support materials for Communication Skills exams, visit our website: trinitycollege.com/communication-skills

PREPARE TO PERFORM

DEVELOP THE REAL-WORLD SKILLS YOU NEED TO PERFORM

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