



Session 5

Expression and Delivery



How it works.

In pairs:

- One person makes the sentence sound good
- The other person makes it sound bad

Be ready to present your version to the class.

Challenge:

Can you change the feeling of the sentence without changing the basic fact?



Instruction



Example

Neutral:

London is a big city.

Positive:

London is a big, multicultural, thriving city.

Negative:

London is a big, dangerous, noisy city.

Word choice changes the mood of what you say.



Instruction

The building
is old.

The journey
takes a long
time

The film was
popular

The room
was quiet

The event
was well
attended

The street
was busy

The book
was difficult

The weather
changed
suddenly

Instruction

Practice

What makes a speech sound strong?

A persuasive speaker uses:

Voice — clear and confident

Pace — not too fast, not too slow

Pause — to give important ideas impact

Tone — serious, passionate, calm, direct

Gesture — natural movement to support meaning



Practice

Sound persuasive without reading a script.

You do not need to memorise a full speech.

Strong speakers usually:

Know their main points

Practise key phrases

Speak from notes

Sound natural, not robotic

Aim for confidence, not perfection.



From flat to powerful

Flat opening:

“Social media is used by lots of teenagers. It can affect people in different ways. Today I am going to explain why it may be harmful.”

Question:

Why does this sound weak?



“Every day, millions of teenagers scroll through platforms designed to capture their attention, shape their self-image and keep them coming back for more. Social media is not just entertainment — it is a force that can damage confidence, increase pressure and harm mental wellbeing. That is why we, as Proposition, strongly believe it does more harm than good.”

What makes this version stronger?

The stronger version uses:

- More precise vocabulary
- A clearer sense of argument
- A strong hook
- More confidence
- More emotive language

Delivery matters too:

- Pause after important ideas
- Vary your tone
- Stress key words
- Use gestures naturally

How might you perform your speech?

Think about:

Where you will pause

Which words you will stress

What tone you will use

Whether a gesture could help

Helpful reminder:

Do not rush.

Do not read every word flatly.



Your turn

You will choose a flat, plain debate opening.

Your task:

- Improve the vocabulary
- Make the opening more persuasive
- Decide where to pause
- Decide which words to stress
- Add gestures if helpful

Make it sound more powerful and purposeful.

Make sure to keep these scripts

Instruction



Or use session 5 Uplevelling opening resource

Practice opening A

Motion (Proposition):

This House believes social media does more harm than good for teenagers

Flat opening:

“Social media is used by lots of teenagers. It can affect people in different ways. Today I am going to explain why it may be harmful.”

Practice opening B

Motion (Proposition):

This House would require the media to give women's sport equal coverage to men's sport

Flat opening:

“Women's sport is shown less than men's sport. Some people think this is unfair. We think the media should show it equally.”

After making notes for your speech, find a partner

In pairs:

- One person performs the improved opening
- The other listens and gives feedback

Then swap.

Feedback prompts:

- Was it clear?
- Did it sound confident?
- Did the speaker use pauses well?
- Which words had the most impact?



Practice

Quick recap.

So far, we have practised:

- Reasoning & Evidence — strong arguments and examples
- Organisation & Prioritisation — best points and clear structure
- Listening & Response — rebuttal, POIs and summary speeches
- Expression & Delivery — voice, pace, tone and gesture

These are the core skills that the judges will be assessing you on.

Practice

Which judging criterion matters most?

In pairs or small groups, discuss:
Which judging criterion matters most?

- Reasoning and Evidence
- Organisation and Prioritisation
- Listening and Response
- Expression and Delivery

Be ready to justify your answer.





Complete one sentence:

- A persuasive opening should...
- One delivery skill I used today was...
- Pause is useful because...
- I want to improve my...