

Warm Up. In small groups, discuss the following questions:

- 1) Do you have to give many presentations at work / at school? What are they usually about?
- 2) How do you prepare for a speech or a presentation?
- 3) When was the last time you had to give a presentation in front of your colleagues? How did it go?
- 4) How do you feel before, during and after speaking in front of an audience? Do your feelings change at different stages?
- 5) Many people dread public speaking, especially speaking exams. Can you share any tips or strategies that help you manage your nerves and stay focused?

Task 1. Watch [Jess Ekstrom's TEDx talk on Public Speaking \(2025\)](#)

After watching, discuss in pairs:

Do you consider this talk successful or unsuccessful? Why?

Think about the speaker's delivery, body language, structure, audience engagement, story telling and the message itself.

Task 2. Go through the questions and choose the most appropriate answer.

1. Why did Jess cycle around her neighbourhood shouting about the ice cream truck?

- A. From a young age, she knew that information is power, and she wanted to be a leader.
- B. She was training for a career as an emergency services operator.
- C. She was thrilled to share valuable information and nothing else really mattered.
- D. She loved making dramatic appearances: frantically knocking on the doors, sweating and shrieking.

2. According to Jess, why is public speaking becoming increasingly important in the age of AI?

- A. Because human interaction is meant to be performed live, in real life scenarios.
- B. Because AI can deliver flawless speeches but it's unable to touch the human chord.
- C. Because advanced tech is planning to take over all human communication channels.
- D. Because relying on AI blindly will make people evolve in 3 stages: dumb, dumber and dumbest.

3. What does Jess say public speaking can help people achieve?

- A. The ability to win every argument with their partner.
- B. The opportunity to avoid all future job interviews.
- C. The chance to become an A-list influencer, thus enjoying fame and wealth.
- D. Opportunities such as landing a dream job or closing an important deal.

4. What does Jess mean when she says the pressure to be perfect puts our nerves "into a pressure cooker"?

- A. Public speaking helps people blow off some steam.
- B. The pressure makes people feel increasingly tense and anxious.
- C. People prefer being in the casket than actually giving a eulogy at a funeral.
- D. Audiences are legally allowed to boo and throw tomatoes at nervous speakers.

5. Why does Jess suggest that formal education may contribute to people's fear of public speaking?

- A. Schools often prioritise perfect spelling and rote memorisation over effective communication.
- B. Even today, schools instil the fear of making mistakes.
- C. Schools leave little room for creativity, spontaneity and improvisation.
- D. All of the above reflect aspects of the underlying problem.

6. What kind of advice does Jess criticise when it comes to overcoming nervousness?

- A. Practise your speech several times before the big day.
- B. Think carefully about what your audience needs.
- C. Just stand tall, speak up and take up space.
- D. If you're the introvert-kind of person, you'll never give a successful speech.

7. Jess says she had to "flop before she could fly". What does this suggest?

- A. The best way to improve is to practise giving speeches on aeroplanes, wearing comfy flip-flops.
- B. Unless someone fails spectacularly in public, they will learn nothing about failure.
- C. If your first speech goes badly, you should immediately flee to a remote, deserted island.
- D. Mistakes and failed experiences are essential steps towards success.

8. What is a "spotlight speaker" in Jess's metaphor?

- A. Someone who can tell jokes on the spot and make their discourse light and entertaining.
- B. Someone who shines a literal spotlight into the audience's eyes.
- C. Someone who always manages to deliver successful talks.
- D. Someone who focuses on themselves rather than on their speech and audience.

9. What is a "lighthouse speaker"?

- A. Someone who uses a maritime theme in every presentation, regardless of the topic.
- B. Someone who focuses on what the audience needs rather than on their own image.
- C. Someone who speaks lightly about dead-serious issues.
- D. Someone who guides the audience in the dark of the conference room.

10. What is the main message Jess wants the audience to remember?

- A. Great public speaking is mainly about developing a powerful, confident personality.
- B. The best speakers are the ones who tell the most dramatic stories.
- C. To become a great speaker, you must learn to enjoy being the centre of attention.
- D. Great public speaking is about connecting with your audience and crafting content that is meaningful to them.

Task 4. Oral Mediation: 10 tips to become a great public speaker