

Twain Associates, Inc.

Effective Speaking Student Guide

Want to grab the title of class president, team captain, sorority or fraternity leader? Or maybe you itch to climb into business management---the big office, luxury car---or be a famous spiritual leader? Well, it's easy. Just learn how to get a group to leap to their feet while shouting your name in praise.

"Oh, man, get real," you say. I'm serious. Very serious. It happens almost every day in sporting events, half-time locker room. Right--coaches stirring their teams to a fighting rage.

The problem is that we have lousy role models. We're surrounded by dull speakers. Maybe it's our minister, rabbi, principal or dean. They stand behind the lectern, gripping the box, droning on in a monotonous, boring voice. No wonder we fade off. There is nothing worth seeing at the lectern.

And it's not that the advice they give is stupid. Often the message cries with importance--our soul, study habits, or safety. So why do we doze? Think about it.

The answer is not what is said, but how it is said. In Julius Caesar, Mark Antony is addressing the crowd shortly after Caesar was murdered. Antony says, "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears. I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him..."

Can you imagine Antony with no gestures because he's hugging the lectern? No eye contact because he's reading his notes? Speaking in a flat, dull voice because he's concentrating on correctly pronouncing his words?

Our first problem is that we have poor role models as speakers. The second problem is even more severe. Who in his right mind enjoys getting up in front of an audience? When was the last time you volunteered to speak to your congregation or in the auditorium packed with your classmates?

Of course you don't volunteer. Who wants a panic attack and clammy sweat? "All the world's a stage," wrote Shakespeare, who might well have added, "and every player on it has stage fright."

So it's no wonder that so few students ever learn how to persuade an audience. Well, I've got good news for you. It "ain't" as tough as you think, and sure easier than learning how to play tennis or skate.

To become a tennis or figure skating star would take years. However, with a few lessons from a pro, you could play tennis or skate reasonably well. But, remember, how many want to play tennis or skate? Competition is fierce. Listen. You'll have no competition in presenting well, because everybody is lousy at it and nobody wants to try it or volunteer.

So with a little improvement you will quickly shoot past your peers. It will be easy to outshine them – out present them. You're already on your way to riches and fame.