

# How to Speak to a Non-Native English Speaking Audience



In today's global economy, there's a good chance you'll have to speak in front of an audience of non-native English speakers. How can you speak so your listeners will understand? The Public Speaker shares 12 helpful tips to make your point clear.

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A [Public Speaker](#) listener named Emily emailed me with a question:

"My company is headquartered in Japan and I will be presenting to the research and development department there about the activities at the U.S. branch. Many of the attendees don't speak English (the language in which I'm presenting). Do you have any advice for a good way to help me give the presentation in an understandable way?"

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I can relate to Emily's situation. I have given many presentations to non-native speakers of English both in the U.S. and abroad. And I've learned through experience. Here are 12 tips that apply when you are speaking to English as a Second Language (ESL) speakers in their own country:

**Tip #1: Speak more slowly.** Write out cards or sticky notes and place them around you to remind you to s-l-o-w d-o-w-n. Most of us speak too quickly when we're nervous. Even native English speakers have trouble understanding when a presenter speaks quickly. A non-native speaker will quickly be lost. A good pace is about 100-120 words per minute ,

**Tip #2: Repeat your main ideas several times using different words.** Your listeners may not understand the first time, but hearing the point stated differently will help make it clear. For example, you might say, "Only you can prevent forest fires." Then, after your example or support, you'd make the point again, but

using different words. Something like:

"It's up to us to protect our forests from the dangers of fire."

Or

"When you camp in the forest, make sure you put your fire out completely before you leave."

Also, keep in mind, if someone asks you to repeat something, it is best not to repeat the exact same words again. Instead express the same ideas using different words. (This is good advice for native speaking audiences too!)

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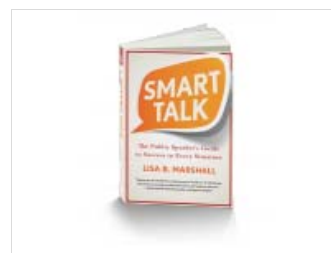
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