

Public Speaking

Detailed READ Version

Tim Messerschmidt & Katharina Lindenthal
Google Developer Relations

@SeraAndroid // @ThisKatha

Everyone gives speeches.
Every single day.*

**We are constantly delivering content -- technical and non-technical to all sorts of audience without even recognizing it. Our ability to transform and explaining content based on our audience often makes us the expert in our specific field. People struggle translating this expertise onto a stage performance: public speaking.*

Meet Lisa

(example from real life: WTM Summit 2016 in Munich)

- She never spoke publicly before.
- She thought, she is not good at it. And did not know what to talk about.
- She got encouraged by a colleague to try it. To share about her work.
- She was not sure, but gave it a try.
- They did two rehearsals.
- She spoke in front of 150 people (first time). And she was amazing!!!

You can be like Lisa!*

*but you can also start with a smaller community meetup :)



Source: pexels.com

Learn to be a Speaker

- Being a good speaker does not come naturally, it is learned. Everyone can become a great speaker.
- There are techniques and tools that you can use to be confident on stage.
- You don't need to be an expert in your technology to give a great tech talk, no one knows everything.



1+ month before

Every presentation needs to be prepared: it does not matter, if this is a short overview talk or a keynote. This is the foundation to be confident on stage.

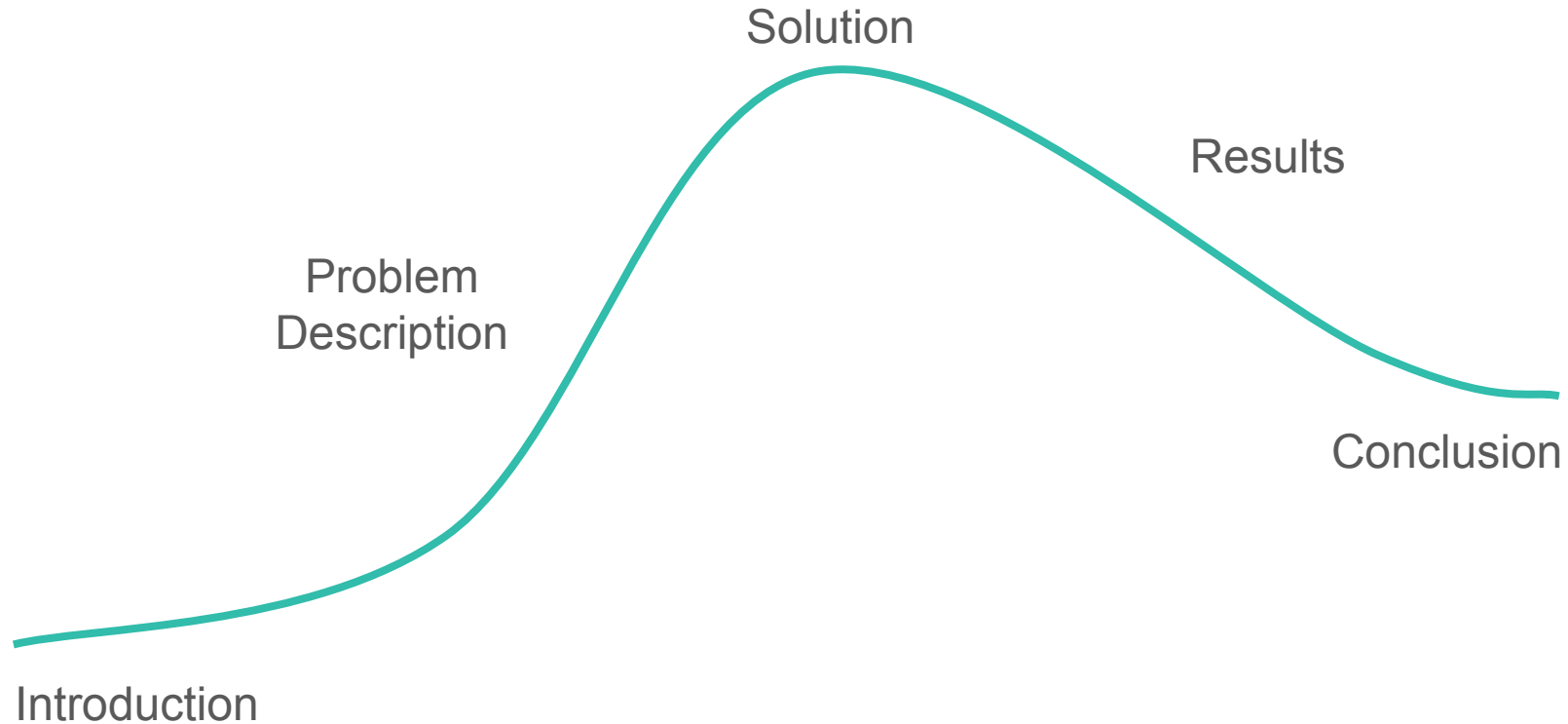
Everyone has a story

All developers have insights/stories to tell, how they work with/in tech:

- Struggles and successes while coding
- It does not have to be experts talks - beginner topics are great!
- Different approaches:
 - Tech, you will learn for the talk
 - You already know quite good and want to share



Follow a Structure



Follow a Structure

The Freytag Pyramid from a classical drama is also used in movies/storytelling nowadays. I guides you through a structure, that is very familiar to everyone, which makes it easier for your audience to follow your talk.

You make everyone familiar with the topic (**introduction**), **describe the problem** you are tackling/that you ran into, reveal the **solution** to this problem and explain the **results**/impact of it, before you end the talk with a **conclusion** and summary of the learned.

Engage a mixed audience with your session: 20% beginners, 60% advanced, 20% experts.

Write your Talk

Write either **word by word** or note down **bullet points**. This helps to:

- Check the structure/flow of your talk
- Phrase sentences (specifically if you are not an English native speaker)
- Practice your talk
- Make sure to not add all information on the slides
- Use “CLICK” (move to the next slide) and “- - -” (for a Pause)



3+ weeks

Create supportive Slides. Focus on a design, that is easy, simple and accessible - so it does not distract the audience from what you have to say.
Implement code the right way.

More than 1.000 Words

Use **pictures** to emphasize your story:

- The less text you have on your slides the less your audience is distracted
- Don't write what you are saying
(exceptions: e.g., citation, essence of the talk)
- Thumb rule: No more than five bullet points per slide
- Check on Copyrights: free licenses or CC license:

pexels.com, stocksnap.io, pixabay.com, unsplash.com,
picjumbo.com, freepik.com



Making a Point: Bullet Points

- Here is a lot of text in the first bullet point
- Same for the next bullet point
- Hey look, another bullet point, I have so much to say
- I am really important, see how much I have to say
- Are you still listening to us? Are you?
- Because, this is really important, too!
- Thanks for reading this, but not listening to me!

Consistency in Text and Design

The design/layout of your talk should be consistent through your session and not distract the audience from your content.

This includes: following a color scheme (e.g. here it is five colors including text with around 5 different slides that are used).

If you are not sure, what to use: all of the major platforms have themes you can choose from that follow general standards.

Make also sure that you use only 80% of visual space for content (exceptions are images): as white space helps the audience to focus on the content and a beamer could cut also the side of your presentation.

Consistency in Text and Design

This is a section title

This is a headline

This is normal text

This is code

This is a color theme



Consistency in Text and Design

This is a section title

This is a regular headline

This is normal text

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This is a color theme



*80 Percent
Visual Space*

4.5 : 1

Suggested contrast ratio between
two colors on slides.

Colour Contrast Check

Date created: January 11, 2005

Date last modified: January 11, 2015

Foreground Colour:

FFFFFFFF

Red:

Green:

Blue:

Hue (°)

Saturation (%):

Value (%):

Background Colour:

0E2435

Red:

Green:

Blue:

Hue (°):

Saturation (%):

Value (%):

Results

This is example text. **Some of it bolded.**
Some of it italicized.

Brightness Difference: (≥ 125) 223.64

Colour Difference: (≥ 500) 662

Are colours compliant? YES

Contrast Ratio 15.879

WCAG 2 AA Compliant YES

WCAG 2 AA Compliant (18pt+) YES

WCAG 2 AAA Compliant YES

WCAG 2 AAA Compliant (18pt+) YES

W3C Web Accessibility Initiative

How to Make Your Presentations Accessible to All

[w3.org/WAI/teach-advocate/accessible-presentations/](https://www.w3.org/WAI/teach-advocate/accessible-presentations/)

This website helps you make your presentations, talks, meetings, and training accessible to all of your potential audience, including people with disabilities and others.

Code - The Easy Way

If in doubt, use tools that can help you to share code in an easy readable way:
e.g. [Carbon.now.sh](https://carbon.now.sh)



Code - The Not Quite As Easy Way

```
1 exports.makeUppercase =  
2   functions.database.ref('/messages/{pushId}/original')  
3     .onCreate((snapshot, context) => {  
4       const original = snapshot.val();  
5       console.log('Uppercasing', context.params.pushId, original);  
6       const uppercase = original.toUpperCase();  
7       return snapshot.ref.parent.child('uppercase').set(uppercase);  
8     });
```

Code - The Not Quite As Easy Way

- Focus on the code that you need to show (don't show 50+ lines)
- Number the single lines of code (it's easier to reference) and indent it accordingly to the syntax
- Remove comments
- Highlight the syntax of your code
- Highlight single lines if you talk about something specific

Transitions & Animations

Using transitions and animations has a simple rule: **DON'T USE THEM. Make everything PDF-Ready.**

Why? A lot of time the transitions/animations don't work out as they should: they distract the audience, the effects come in the wrong time, loading takes too long, or it is not supported. It usually also does not help to emphasize your content.

You might even be asked to share your presentation as PDF. So have that version ready anyway.

1-2 weeks before

Once you have a great topic, structure and slide deck, it is all about practicing and setting all up.

Know your Talk

Know by heart, what you are speaking about, that you could do the presentation almost 'blindfolded'. To get comfortable with your performance:

- Record yourself while rehearsing (to check on body language, tonality,...)
- Do a dry-run without slides to test your memory
- Practice in front of a known audience (family, friends)



Inclusive Language

Plural is your friend

- their experience, NOT his/her experience

Don't generalize:

- NOT: as we all know
- NOT: here you see the GUI

Put people first

- person with a disability, NOT disabled person

Use neutral expressions

- NOT: Men cannot multitask
- Hi everyone, NOT Hi guys
- Police Officer, NOT Policeman

Make it universal

- Hi everyone, NOT Hi guys
- Susan's partner, NOT Susan's boyfriend

Work with Weaknesses

There are words, that are hard for you to pronounce “tongue twisters”:

- Practice them until they feel easy OR
- Use another word/rephrase it

If you have an accent (e.g., if you are a non-native English speaker):

- Don't try to avoid it, you are not tested in Oxford English
- You can address this if that makes you feel more comfortable



30 minutes to go

The day of your talk is finally there - you are arriving at the event location - now is the time to make sure, that everything is ready for you going on stage.

Check your Tech-Setup

- Is the laptop charging? Phone silent?
- Is your screensaver off (use e.g., “Stay Awake”/“Caffeine”)?
- Are notifications turned off?
- Presentation available offline?
- Does your presenter/mic work?
- Is the preso on screen distorted? If so, adjust display settings.
- Can you see your notes (on extra screen, your laptop)? Need to resize them?



The Stage is Yours

Make yourself familiar with the stage.

- What is the space that you can use (move around and try to be most visible to the audience).
- Check, when are you standing in front of your own presentation (so attendees cannot see the content anymore).
- Is the lightning disturbing (some spots you might avoid to stand on)?



5 minutes to go

You might be nervous. And excited. And a bit frightened. That is completely normal. In this (and any other) case: take some time before the talk to relax.

Take Your Five Minutes

There are many techniques for relaxing and calming down (or getting excited, as this also helps to be more successful on stage).

We will cover some of them, but you might have - or find your own, that works best for you.

Most important: take your five minutes before the talk to get ready for it.

Breathing Techniques

- **Kapalabhati Breathing:** heating up your body and sharpen your focus (more info e.g., [here](#) or [video](#))
- **Breath Counting:** calming exercise with with counting every in/exhale up to 10 during your natural breath (more info e.g., [here](#) or [video](#))
- More breathing techniques [here](#) or [here](#)



Power Posing

Even though the scientific effects* of power posing are not conclusive, this can be helpful before getting on stage:

- Find a quiet space
- Get into one or more power-poses for 2-5 minutes

More examples on the next slide

* more details [here](#)



Source: pexels.com



The Power of Music

Music can be powerful in either calming down or energizing you as well.

This can work out for you in sitting down and listening to a calming, relaxing song or literally dancing/head-banging somewhere to your favorite “party-song” to loosen up a bit.



3... 2... 1...

Your talk starts! The audience is eager to learn who is the person presenting the talk. This is your first moment to shine.

Dress up!?

- Not too colorful/too many patterns
- Wear something comfortable
- Better slightly different from the crowd than feeling like a costume (suit at tech conference)



Make an Impression

- First impressions are made within the first 100ms. Use an open, friendly and calm body language.
- If you are introduced by the conference/community: great! No need to repeat what they've said.
- There is no need to introduce yourself with your whole bio. The audience is interested in your talk, not where you went to school.



Introduction

- Don't use a slide with all of your bio on it, have the title of your talk as a background (or use a picture)
- There is a reason why you speak on stage, you don't need to justify with listing all your degrees etc.
- Sharing a personal fact or some background makes it easier for the audience to connect to you



2 minutes in the talk

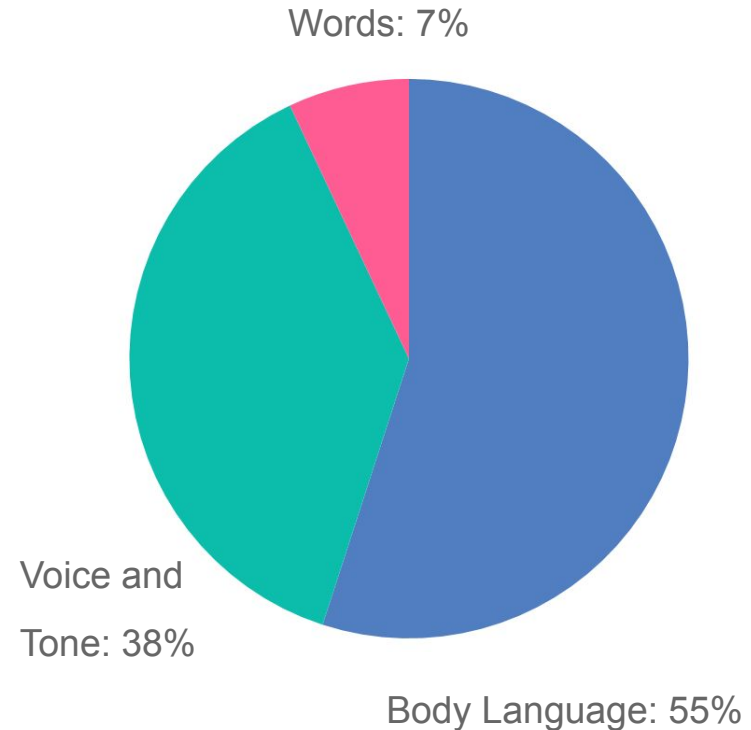
Your time to own the stage. There are various tricks and tools to own the stage and present your content.

Words Matter?!

Every communication consists of three elements: words, intonation and body language. This does not mean that the content is not important, but that non-verbal elements should be consistent with verbal ones.

Example: “I don’t have a problem with you” while avoiding eye contact and speaking quietly.

Source: communication model by [Albert Mehrabian](#)



Don't Hide

Make sure, that you are visible:

- Don't stand on the side of the stage in the shadows.
- There might be a podium on stage. If so, don't hide behind it.
- Hold onto Microphone or your notes (not podium or lean against the wall).
- Face your audience, don't turn to the screen.



Use Expressive Gestures

As you've learned, body language supports your speech. Gestures emphasize what you are saying.

Don't overuse it or throw your hands around excessively, but use them as visual aids, clarify and support your words or dramatize your ideas.

In general, they should feel natural.



Move with Purpose

- Hold notes or hands at your side when not gesturing, **not:** hands in your pocket or crossing your arms.
- Stand steady on both legs, **not:** leaning on one leg or wobbling around.
- Move calmly (don't speak when moving), **not:** running around nervously.



Connect to the Audience

- Make eye contact. You will always find one or two people nodding/smiling at you.
- Address the whole audience, not just look at the people in the middle/front row.
- Besides eye contact, you can also connect with them through jokes, anecdotes or include them with questions.



Your Voice as Instrument

- Speak louder and slower as you would naturally: makes you sound more confident and powerful.
- Pitch down the tonality of your voice (high-pitch voices are perceived as less authoritative).
- Use pauses to emphasize content
- Train your voice: practice and record yourself.



Co-Presenting

- Divide the talk fairly between the presenters
- Don't know what your part is for sure: you can help with color-coding/marketing slides.
- If one person speaks, the other steps back and looks at the co-presenter.



During the talk

No matter, how much you prepared, there might be always situations, where something goes wrong. But you can also be prepared for that :)

The Audience: a Friend

Keep in mind: the audience wants you to succeed. They are in favor of you, they are interested in your talk, they are not here to see you fail!

So whatever happens, keep that in mind. Breathe, collect yourself and address the situation.

They will understand.



Blackouts Happen

- Tech/electricity fails: wait some minutes if it comes back, but if not; great, that you are prepared and can speak without your slides.
- You lose your train of thought: take some deep breaths and if necessary go back to your last slide(s).



Stay on Track

There might be additional disturbances during your talk:

- Noises: crying baby/phone going off: address it shortly and then move on.
- Participant disturbing the talk: address to be calm (and e.g. to answer questions later) - in worst case ask organizers to remove them.



2 minutes to go

You are almost done and successfully delivered your session. Now it's time to wrap up your talk.

Before Leaving the Stage

- Conclude/summarize your talk
- Share key takeaways with summarizing your talk
- Give a call to Action
- Share your contact details
- (Answer audience questions)



Handling Questions

- You don't need to take questions. If you do, keep it to a couple of questions.
- If they are too complicated/takes too long to explain, take it "offline". and speak with them after the talk
- You can also in general not answer questions on stage, but after your talk (share where people can find you).



Once You're Done

- #micdrop *yay*
- Be available for attendees (or if you don't, share it with them beforehand).
- Enjoy yourself - you have done an amazing job.
- Gather feedback about your talk.
- Share your talk.



Call to Action

Take the Leap: Get on Stage

You know now, that speaking is just a skill that can be learned. Start small and get comfortable:

- Find a community meetup and share your knowledge.
- Start with a short talk format or share the stage with another speaker.

You will be amazing!



Thank you!