

BASE CAMP

Find Your Starting Point

Before you climb, you need to know where you are.

Most people try to become better speakers by collecting more tips: more vocabulary, more grammar, more techniques, more advice. But progress rarely starts with more information. It starts with awareness.

Base Camp is where you stop trying to sound impressive and begin paying attention to what is already happening when you speak. How do you organize your thoughts? What happens to your voice when you feel nervous? Do you rush, freeze, apologize, or disappear into perfect grammar?

There is no good voice or bad voice here. There is only your current voice - and a decision about what you want to do with it.

GOLD NUGGET

Self-awareness comes before confidence. Commitment comes before improvement.

This lesson has one purpose: help you identify your starting point and take your first speaking step.

THE FIRST SHIFT

Confidence Is Not the Starting Line

A common mistake is waiting to feel confident before speaking. That sounds logical. It is also backwards.

Confidence does not come before speaking.

Confidence comes from speaking.

Every time you speak, you collect evidence. You learn that you can begin a sentence, recover from a mistake, explain an idea, make someone laugh, or finish a thought even when the words are not perfect. Those small pieces of evidence build confidence.

That is why your first talk should not be complicated. Start with the subject you already know better than anyone else: yourself.

Your First Talk

Some people call this an ice breaker talk, while others call it a self-introduction. A simple 3-5 minute self-introduction gives you enough structure to feel prepared, but enough freedom to sound like a real person.

- Who are you?
- What has shaped you?
- What matters to you now?
- Why do you want to become a stronger speaker?

Do not write a perfect script. Build a clear path.

OPEN

Who am I?

STORY

Where am I from? What do I do? What has shaped me?

WHY

Why does stronger speaking matter to me?

NEXT

What do I want to become better at?

A SIMPLE FRAMEWORK

Use the 4Ws to Find Your Words

When people say, “I don’t know what to say,” the problem is often not a lack of ideas. The problem is that the ideas are all arriving at the same time.

The 4Ws give your thoughts somewhere to go:

WHAT

What do I want people to know?

WHERE

Where did this happen? Where am I from?

WHEN

When did this become important to me?

WHY

Why does this matter?

Sometimes you will also need HOW. But do not make the framework bigger than the conversation. The goal is not to sound organized. The goal is to help the listener follow you.

TRY THIS NOW

Choose one simple topic from your own life. Speak for 60 seconds using only three prompts:
What happened? Why did it matter? What did I learn?

Reflection

Do you feel more comfortable when the topic is familiar?

Does a simple structure make speaking easier?

What happens to your voice when you stop trying to be perfect?

WHY I BUILT THIS

My Journey: From Learner to Speaker

When I was learning English, I did what serious students are told to do. I studied grammar. I memorized vocabulary. I worked hard to understand the language.

But understanding English and using English were two different things.

I could know the rules and still hesitate. I could recognize the word and still struggle to say it naturally. I could study for hours and still need courage to begin a conversation.

People often say, “Go live in an English-speaking country.” That can help. But it is not a complete plan - and for many people, it is not realistic.

So I built a practice system around four decisions:

1. Know why speaking English matters to me.
2. Use English in small ways every day.
3. Practice with real people, not only books.
4. Create accountability so I keep showing up.

The result was not instant. It was better than the instant: it was repeatable.

You do not need a dramatic transformation. You need practice you can return to.

Your Turn

What is your reason for becoming a stronger speaker? Write one sentence. Make it specific enough that you can recognize when you are improving.

PRACTICE

Your First Self-Introduction

Do not aim for impressive. Aim for clear, personal, and complete.

1 • WHO

My name is... / I am from...

2 • STORY

A little about my work, family, interests, or an experience that shaped me...

3 • WHY

I want to improve my speaking because...

4 • DIRECTION

One goal I am working toward is...

SPEAKING CHALLENGE

Stand up if you can. Set a timer for 3 minutes. Speak from your notes - not from a script. If you lose your place, pause, breathe, and continue.

Final Reflection

What part felt easiest?

Where did you hesitate?

What is one thing you want to improve next time?

BASE CAMP COMPLETE

You show up. You speak. You now have a starting point.

The next step is not more preparation. It is more practice.

JOIN THE PRACTICE

Bring your self-introduction to a SpeakEmpower practice meeting. Speak it. Hear feedback. Try it again. That is how the journey moves.