Commanding Your Audience:
• Consider how you command the attention those closest to you and how those organic traits may be used effectively toward your speech preparation and eventual presentation. Speak with an intent to move your audience to action!

• Are you loud or quiet? Do you use humor or personal life stories to liven up your discussions? Are you outgoing or naturally shy? There’s no right or wrong answer because all of these factors are pivotal for you to consider how you and your written piece will eventually command your audience(s).

• Remember: Your written piece was half the battle with commanding your audience. If they made it to the end of your paper you’re already winning! Now, review how you’ll aid your audience across the finish line via your voice — Have fun with the process, there’s only one you!

• HOMEWORK: Write down your unique personality traits and consider how those can be used toward commanding your dream audience. Whether you’re outgoing or shy, this is the perfect opportunity for you to be honest with your abilities and step outside your comfort zone!

Eye Contact and Speaking Unusually Slow:
• Commanding your audience takes more than just your voice and overall material. Eye contact and speaking unusually slow are two other heavy hitters to consider.

• Eye Contact: Using your gaze across the room is extremely effective, along with looking directly at specific members of the audience throughout your speech. This not only shows folks in the room that you’re personally invested in them, but it’s as if you’re having a genuine conversation with the individual. This helps create a deeper connection between you, your audience, and your material.

• Speak Slow: Keep yourself accountable by means of recording your voice and timing your presentation. This process helps you through the editing and memorization process, along with effectively hearing your own voice and personal struggles (i.e., nervous laughter, stumbling over words, etc.)

Anxiety:
• Turn your anxiety into excitement and exhilaration!
• Pay close attention to what makes you a nervous speaker during the practice phase. Have your preparation audience be HONEST with you, your speech, and what needs to be improved.
• Consider nervous gestures (fiddling with your hands), filler words (um, so, etc.), your body language (rocking back and forth, playing with hair, etc.), the tone of your voice …
• Remember: Nonverbal communication carries most of your message to the audience. If you look or act uncomfortable, your audience will most definitely pick up on that and feel the same.
• Practice does make perfect, but you have to understand what needs to be fixed before you effectively nail your speech — you got this!