

Tips for Public Readings

Invite family and friends.

Practice tongue twisters. Practice reading to a tape recorder.

Check timing. Run under rather than over. Cut pages rather than trying to read faster.

Use large type. If you tend to lose your place, trace line with a light touch of your fingers. If you tend to look down for too long, type your words on the top half of the page.

Underline points of emphasis. Use arrows to remind yourself to speed up, raise our voice, etc.

Carry your papers in a folder. No ring binder. No stapled pages. Slide your papers from right to left (or left to right) as you read. Never flip or shuffle them.

Wear clothing that makes you feel good.

Do not carry a pen. Do not touch your necklace, tie, collar or glasses.

Drink herbal tea. No alcohol. No caffeine.

Stand squarely on both feet.

Ignore the mike. Look at the people. Breathe.

Act serene. Fake it if you have to.

Use a real voice, not a sing-song poet's voice.

Communicate *with*, rather than read *at*.

Best tips of all:

Focus on the audience, not yourself.

Try to connect with a particular person in the back of the room.

Focus on the main thought or emotion you want that person to get.

Pause. Breathe. Show respect for your work and the audience.