

The Presentation
By Carla Suarez Soto

Speak clearly and at a steady pace and look at the wall. Don't let your voice quiver, sound confident and don't look down at the paper, have it memorized. Make sure the slides have a professional style, nothing too crazy, with only a few bullet points. Practice, speak to your teddy bears or to yourself in the mirror. *Breathe, you will be okay, you are prepared.* But what if I mess up. What if I blank, and the teacher makes that face that tells me I messed up. What if I sound dumb. What if I mispronounce the words. *Breathe, you will be okay, you are prepared. Practice your introduction, maybe start with a joke, or with an interesting story. Stand still, don't wiggle, it'll look like you have to pee. don't stutter or utter or mumble it sounds like you are unprepared and you're not unprepared. Breathe, you will be okay, you are prepared.* But what if that one kid laughs, or what if I drop my flash cards, or what if I start crying. What if that one cute guy that I've never talked to thinks I'm stupid after I present or what if that girl who always has the cute outfits thinks I'm annoying. *Breathe, you will be okay, you are prepared. Wear something professional, but don't wear silk or light colors or you will see the sweat through the shirt. Don't wear sneakers, that's too casual, but don't wear heels you can't walk in those. A blouse, some dress slacks, and some flats should be good, hair in an updo, natural makeup, clean nails, and a subtle perfume.* Oh but what if I spill something on my shirt or what if my frizzy hair won't stay down and what if my mascara smudges. *Breathe you will be okay, you are prepared. Go over the questions: Why did you pick this topic? Why is it important? Can you explain where the information is from? You know all the answers, you did the work, this is the easy part.* But it's not easy, I have to prove that I know what I'm talking about. What if they see I don't belong and they see that it's my first time or what if the judges don't like how I smell. *Breathe, you will be okay, you are prepared. All that work, all that effort, all that practice you can't let it go to waste. You know what you are talking about and that's why you have to share it.* They're calling us up in alphabetical order, I'm next. My hands won't stop shaking, but it's okay I'm prepared.