¶ 5.1

The Mechanics of Speech Delivery



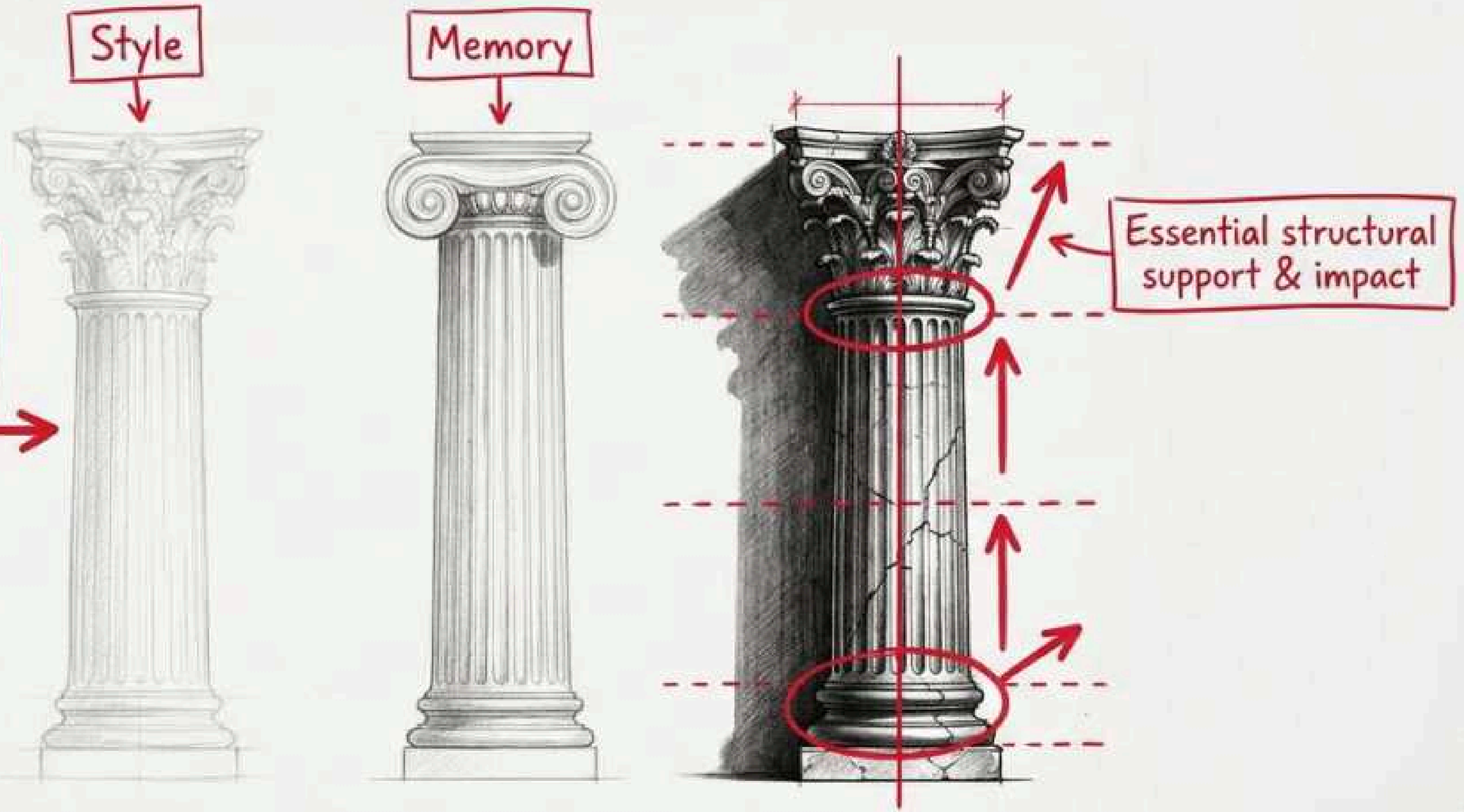
Welcome to Lecture 5:
Voice, Body, and Words

¶ 5.2

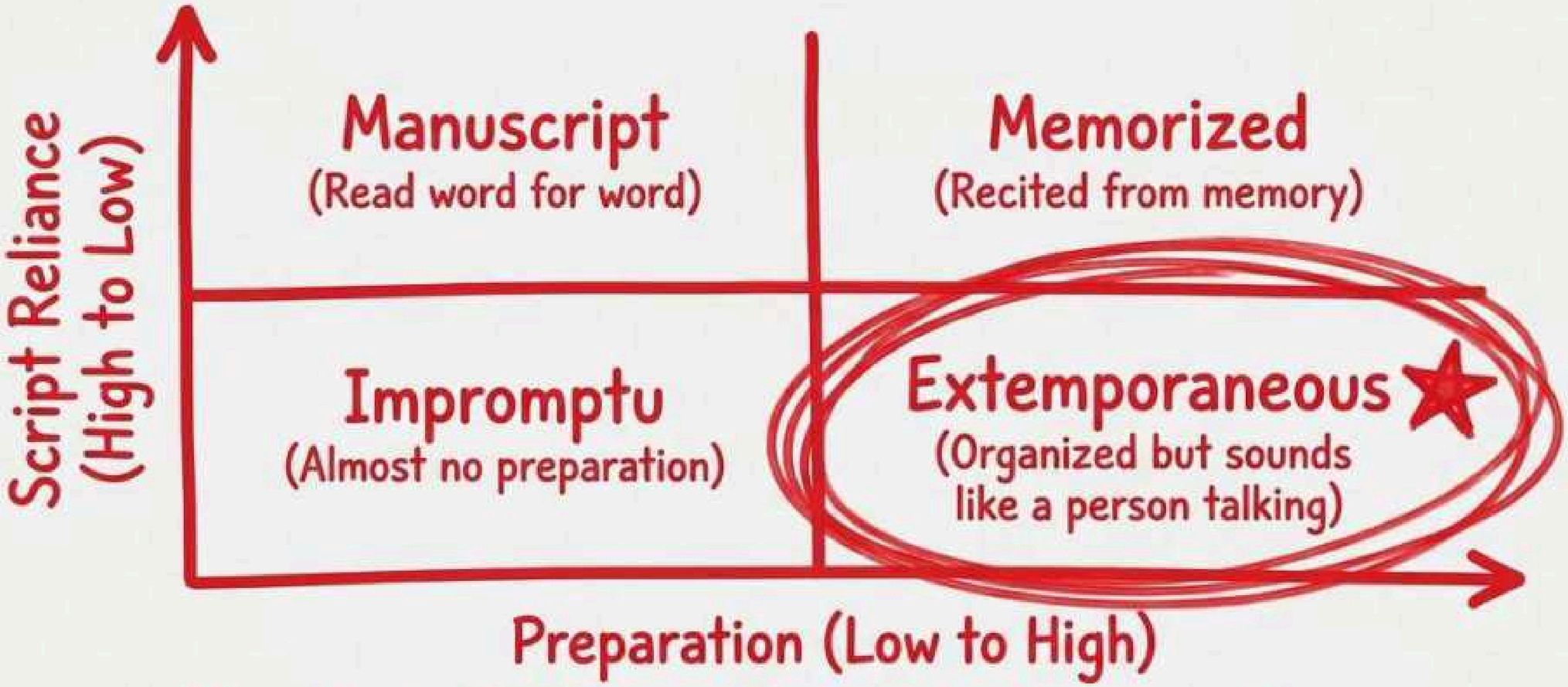
Good delivery is the mechanism that lets the speech be heard

Audience, purpose, structure, and evidence are already built.

Delivery is the final structural pillar.



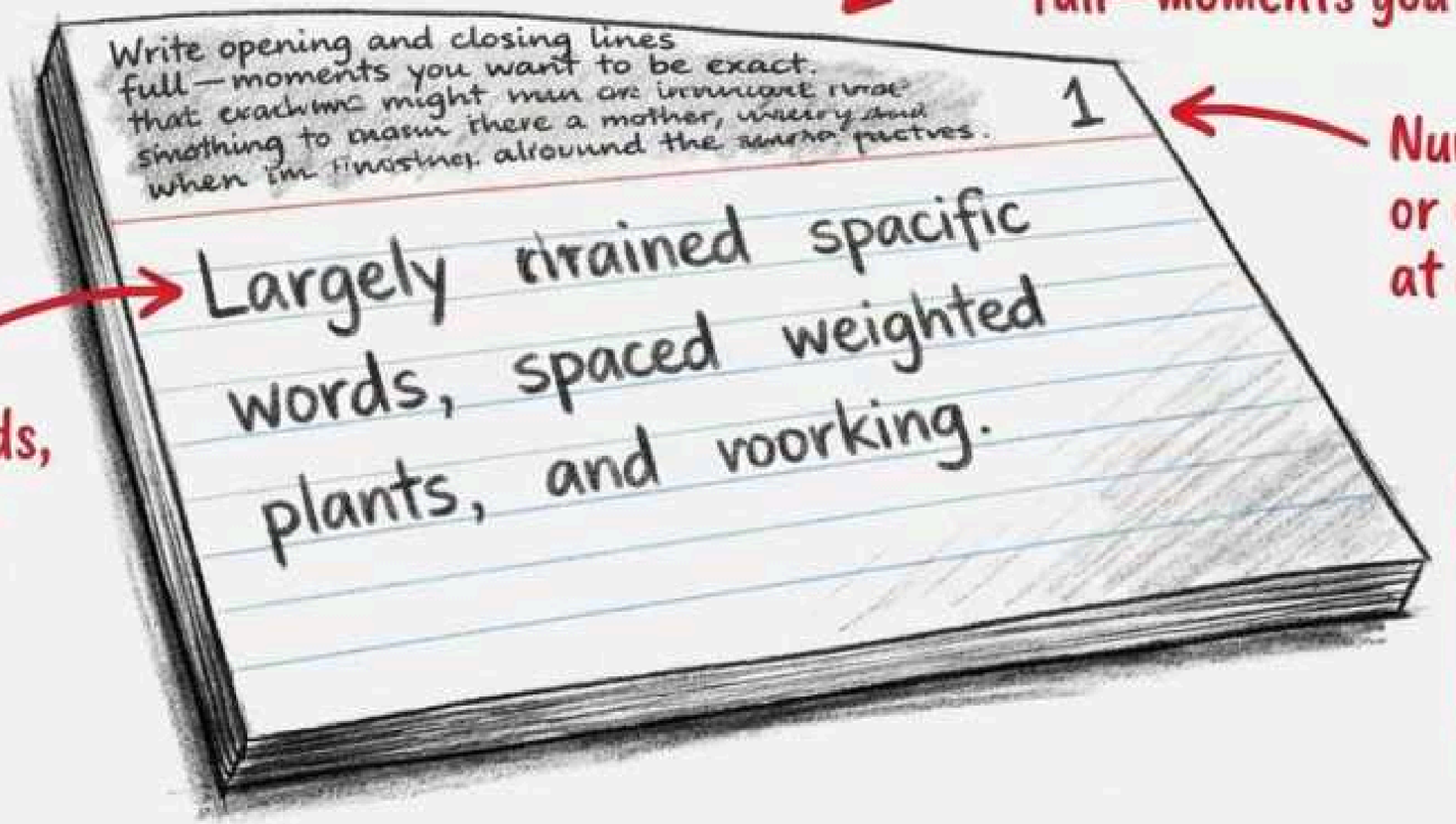
Extemporaneous speaking strikes the perfect balance



The gold standard: Uses a brief outline to find words as you go.

¶ 5.4

Design note cards to prevent the temptation to read



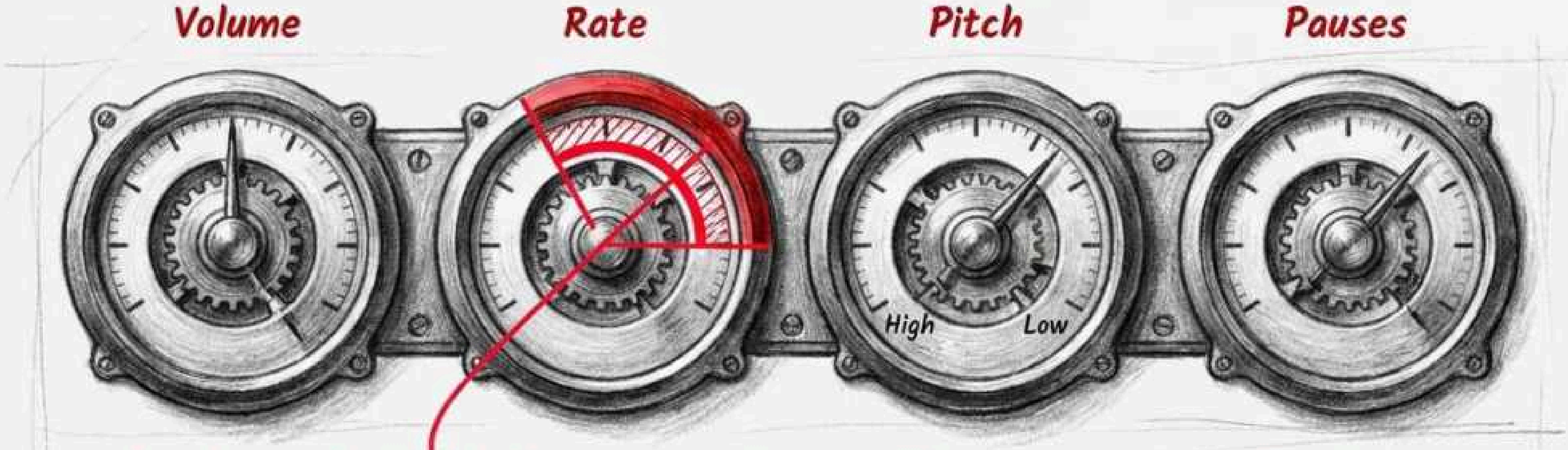
Write opening and closing lines in full—moments you want to be exact.

Number the pages or cards to see at a glance.

Use a few keywords, not full sentences.

Practice until you can look up for most of the speech.

The four instruments of the human voice



Must be heard in the back row

120–160 words per minute (Conversational pace. Nervous speakers speed up)

High to Low modulation

The silences between phrases

Each dial functions as a discrete tool that the speaker can deliberately adjust.

The deliberate pause replaces the verbal filler



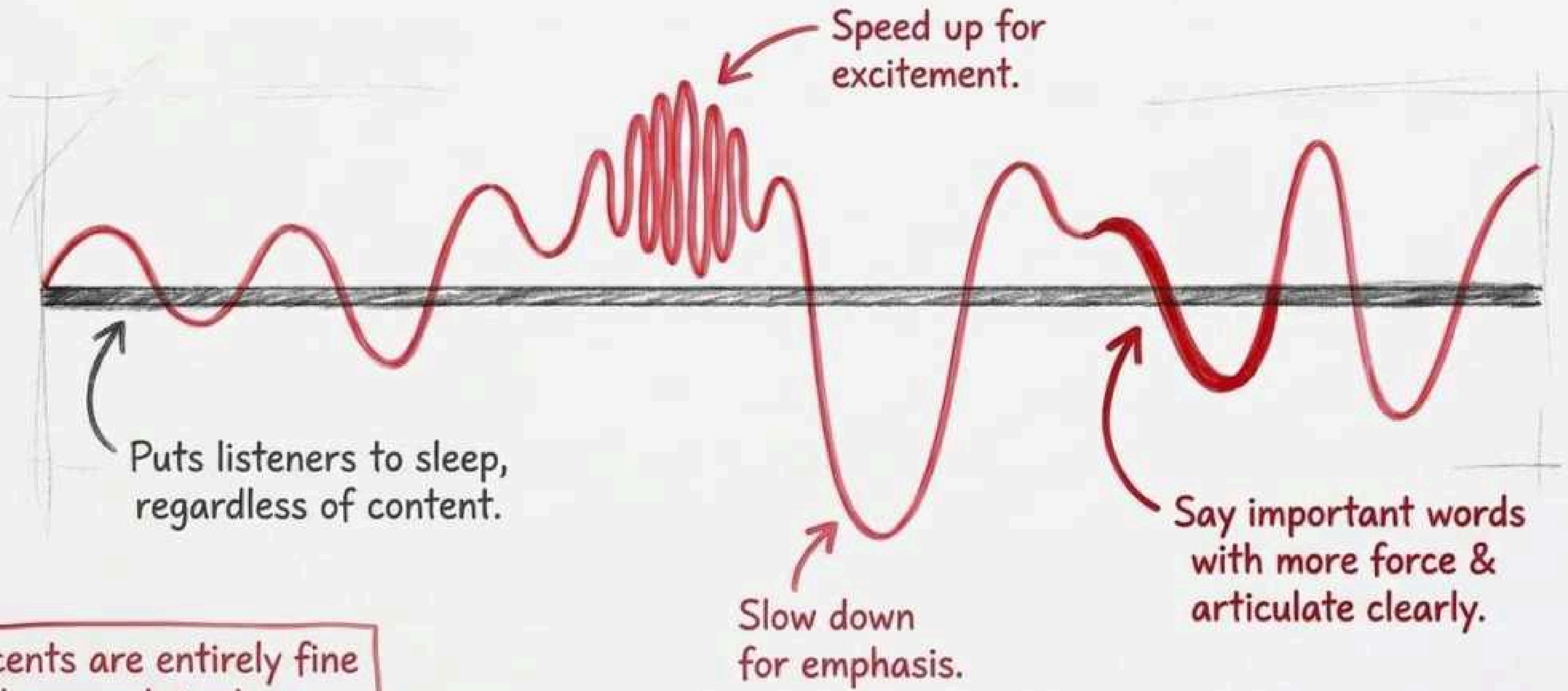
Before an important point:
Makes the audience lean in.

After a question:
Gives them time to think.

For the speaker:
Gives you time to breathe and collect yourself.

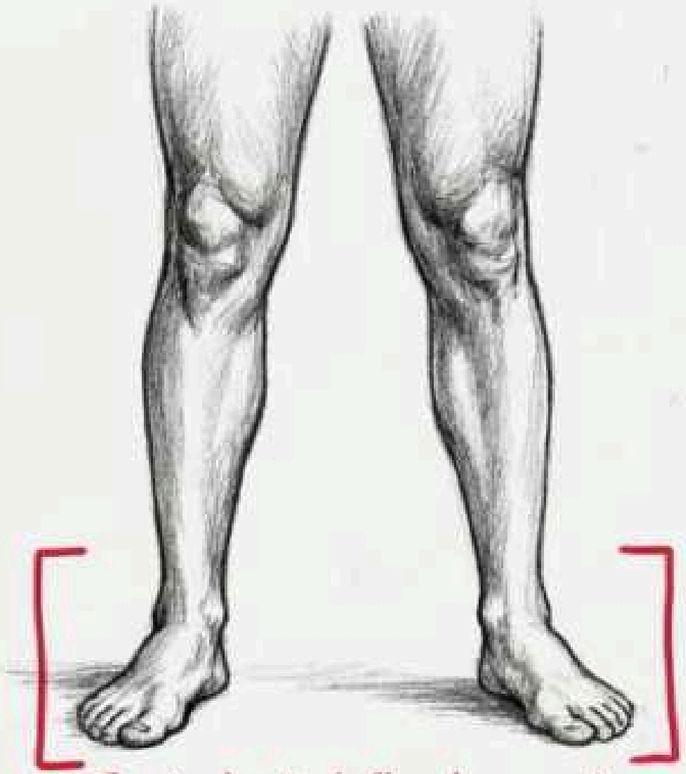
(Do not try to stop fillers directly; replace them with quiet).

Variety is the absolute antidote to monotony



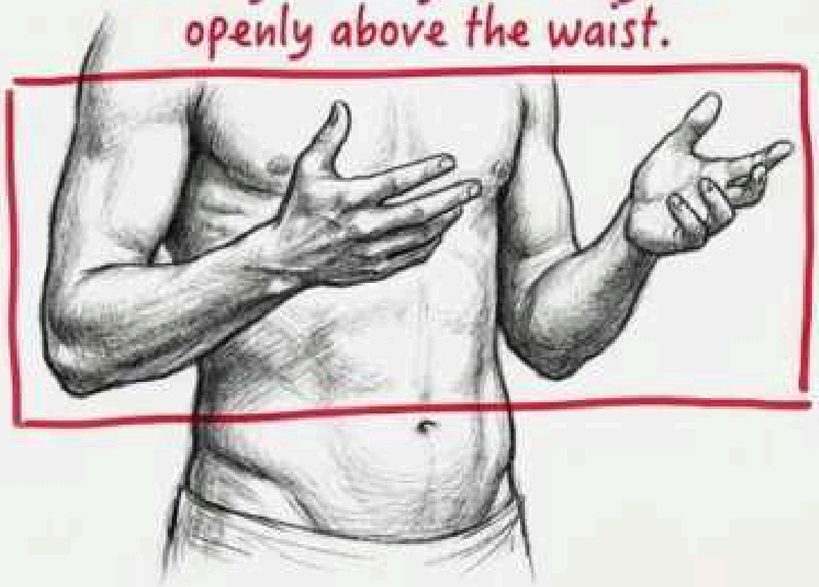
Accents are entirely fine if the speech is clear.

Body language supports rather than distracts



Feet planted firmly apart, weight balanced.

Hands gesturing naturally and openly above the waist.

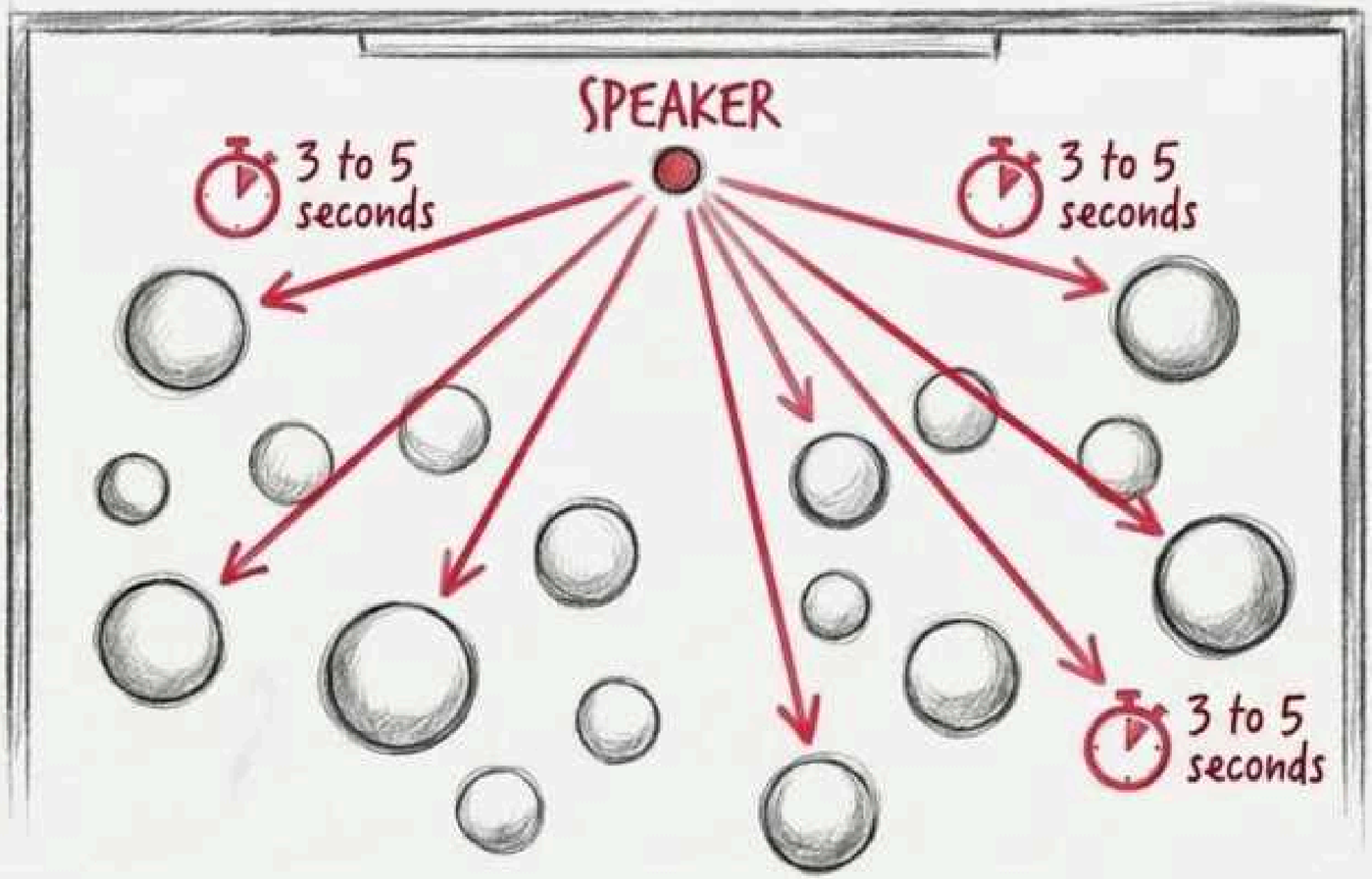




Move with purpose (to make a point or mark a transition). Avoid aimless pacing, swaying, or hiding hands in pockets.

Eye contact builds connection and trust one thought at a time

Look at individuals, one at a time, holding each gaze for a complete thought.



Do not stare at slides, the floor, or the back wall.

Norms differ; in some cultures, sustained direct eye contact can feel rude. Watch your audience and adapt.

Calibrate your expression and appearance to the message



Expression must logically match the subject matter (e.g., jarring to describe a sad event with a grin).

A natural smile warms the room when it suits the subject.

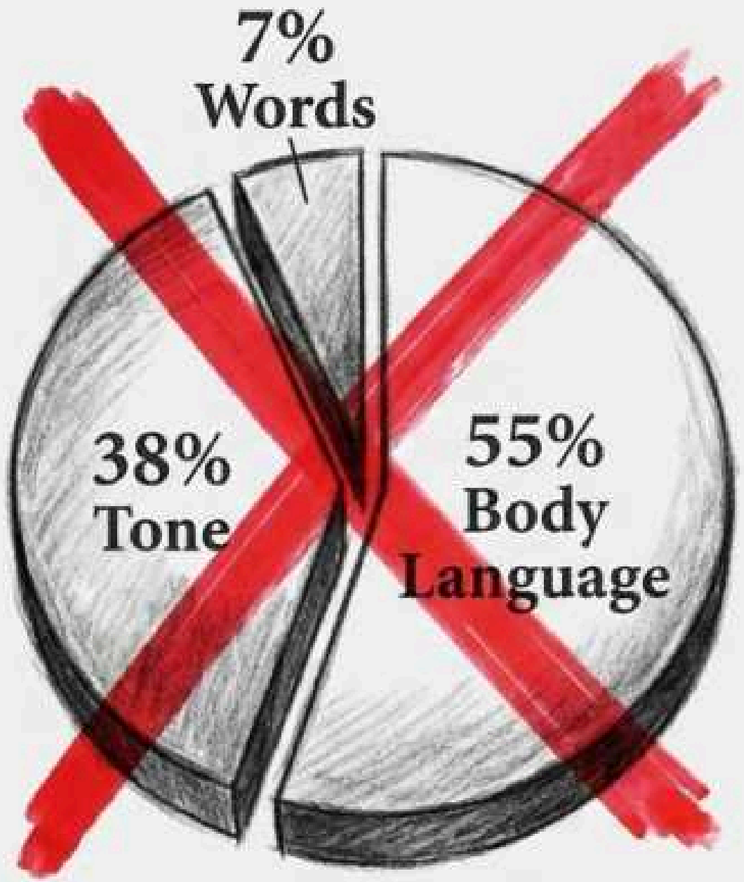


Expression Slider



Formality Scale

Delivery supports words, but it cannot replace them

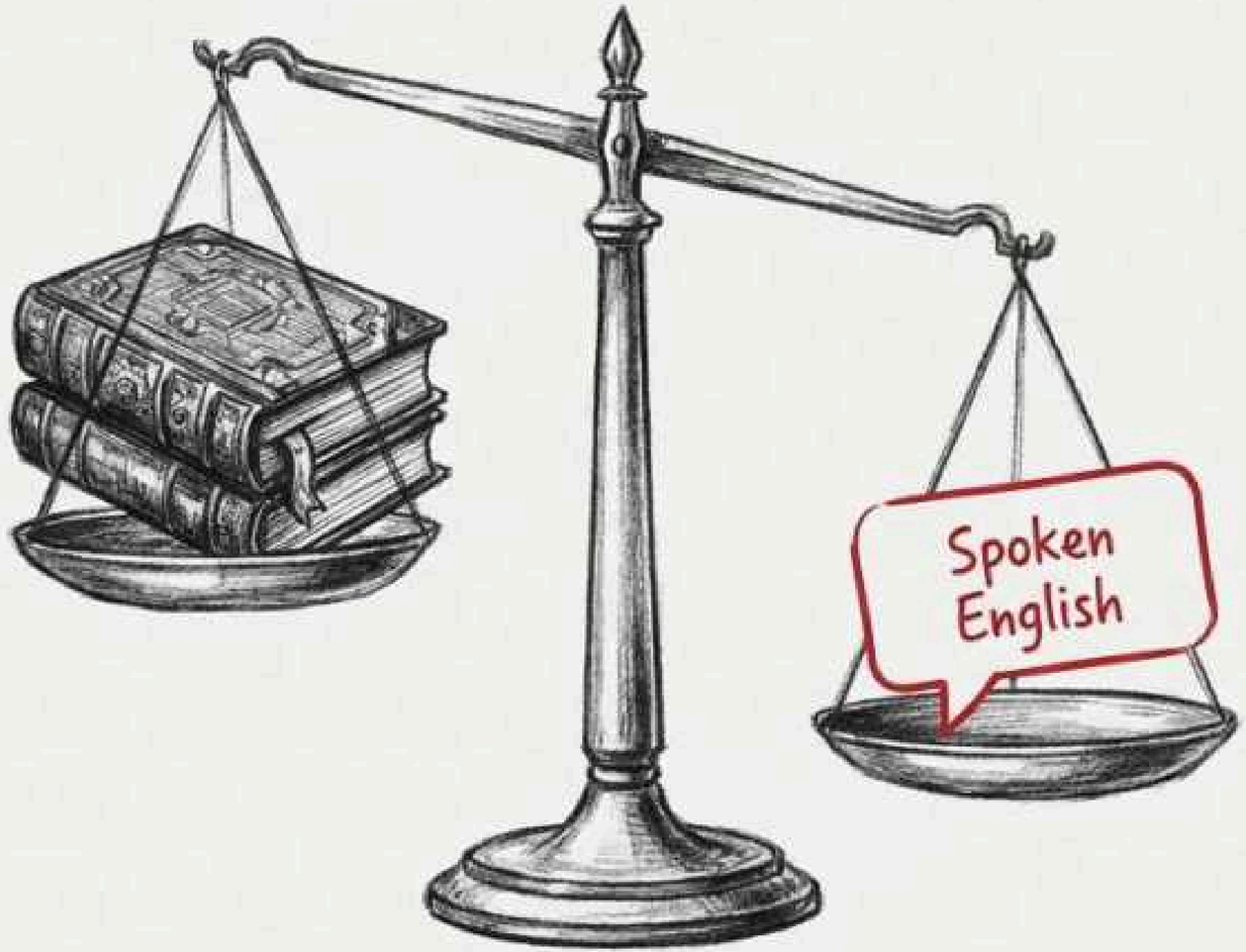


- This famous statistic is a myth.
- It is a misreading of narrow experiments by Albert Mehrabian regarding how people judge feelings when words and tone conflict.
- Mehrabian explicitly states it does not apply to general speeches.

Words carry a great deal of weight.

Spoken English demands clarity and simplicity

Written English



Never use a long word where a short one will do.
— George Orwell

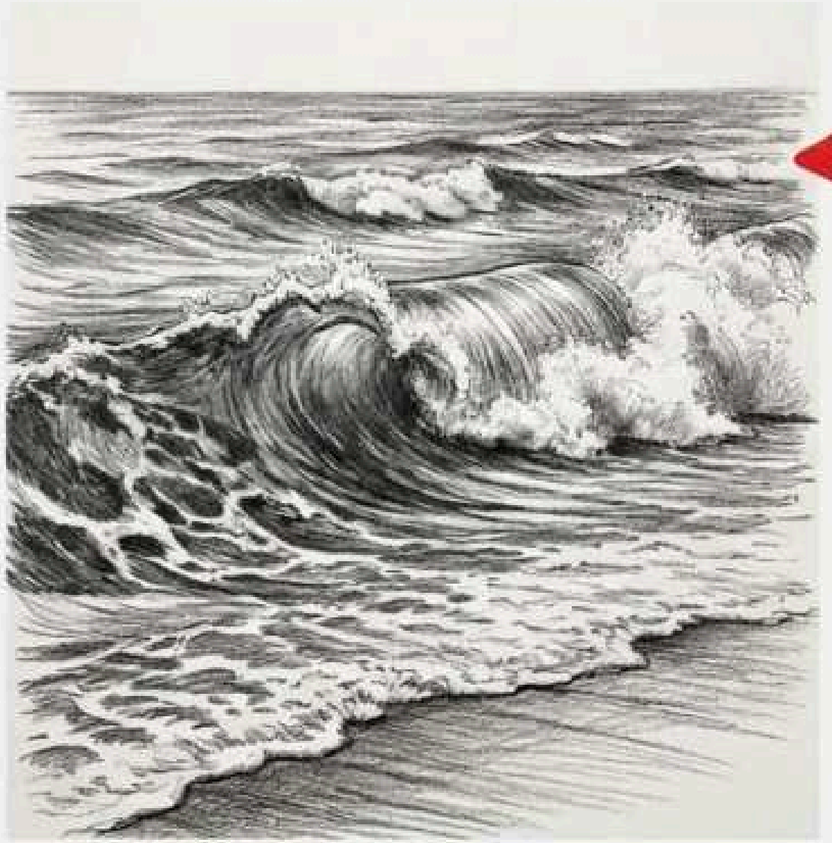
Shorter sentences, simpler words, active voice.

Explain or avoid jargon.

Repetition helps listeners follow, since they can only hear you once.

¶ 5.13

Vivid language makes ideas echo through time



1940: Winston Churchill's "we shall fight on the beaches."

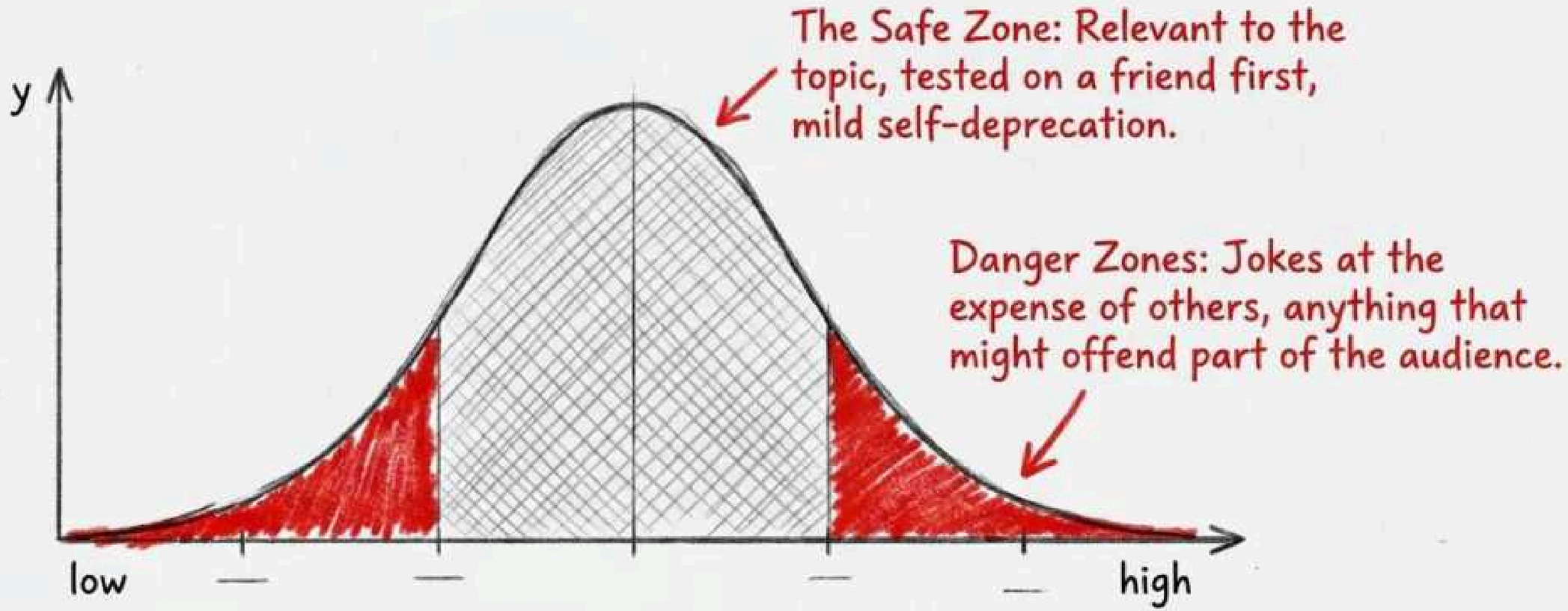
(Concrete imagery).



1963: Martin Luther King's "I have a dream." (Anaphora).

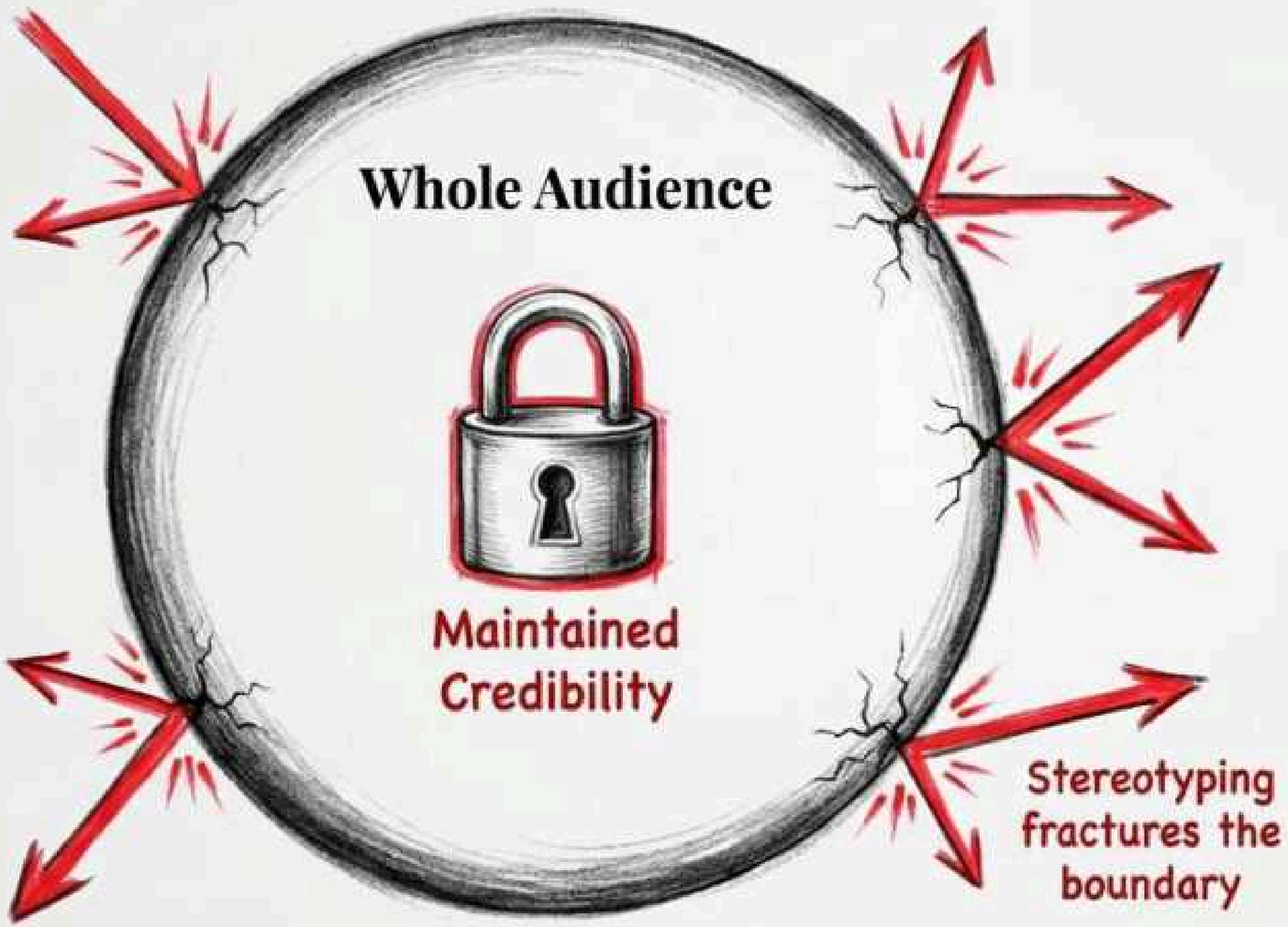
Anaphora: A repeated opening phrase. Among the oldest tools of rhetoric.

The humor risk curve demands caution



Bailout plan: A joke that falls flat is easily survived if you just smile and move on.

Inclusive language maintains your sphere of credibility

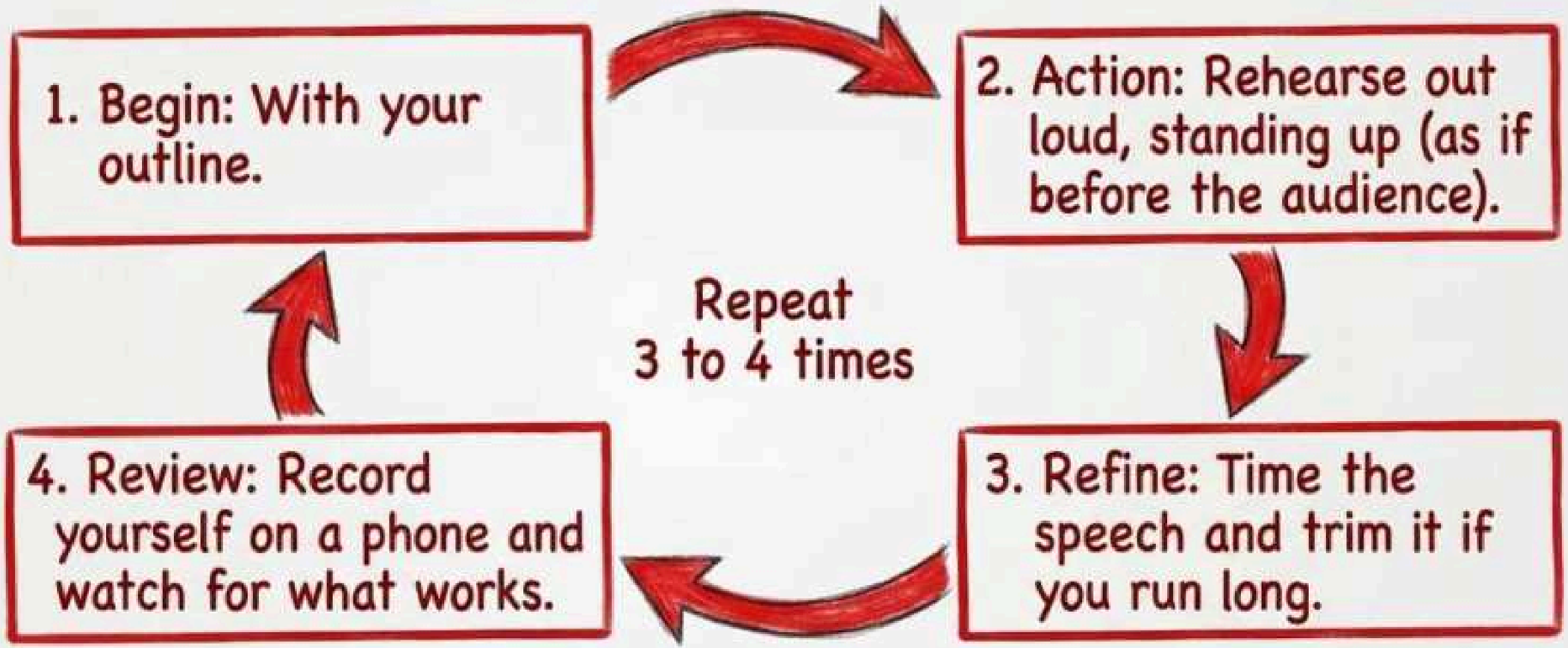


Speak to the whole audience.
Avoid terms that exclude by sex, race, age, disability, or background.

This is not just courtesy:
A listener who feels excluded stops listening.

A speaker who offends part of the room loses credibility with all of it.

The rehearsal loop refines extemporaneous delivery



Strict Warning: Do not memorize word for word—it makes you stiff and leaves you stranded if you forget a line.

Analyze a master and review your own baseline



- ☐ Part 1 (Observation): Think of an admired speaker. What do they do with their voice, body, and words that you could borrow?
- ☐ Part 2 (The Practice Task):
  - ✓ Record a 1-minute version of your speech on your phone, standing up.
  - ✓ Watch it once without judging.
  - ✓ Write down 1 thing to KEEP and 1 thing to CHANGE.

Looking ahead to the final preparations



Upcoming in Lecture 6