1. **Brainstorm topics with your overall goal, purpose, and audience in mind.**
   - Choose a topic you are passionate about.
   - What is your audience’s current knowledge on the topic?
   - Ask yourself what information your audience hasn’t heard before.

2. **Research your topic and become as familiar with it as possible.**
   - Use key search terms from brainstorming to dive deeper into research.
   - Becoming a “mini” expert on the topic aids with confidence and delivery.

3. **Narrow down your topic and start to organize your thoughts**
   - Develop a thesis as a claim that states the overall goal to your speech.
   - Choose 2-5 main points of the most important information.
   - Carefully select supporting material from your research that fits your goal.
   - Start with a working outline, get feedback, revise, and finalize.
   - Don’t forget to integrate citations from your research!

4. **Prepare to present your speech**
   - Create a strong opening. Why should your audience listen to you?
   - Create effective, personalized speaking notecards that work for you.
   - Your notes should serve as a guide not as a word for word manuscript.

5. **Practice, Practice, Practice**
   - Focus on your voice, posture, gestures, eye contact, and speed.
   - Time yourself a few times before actually presenting.
   - Present with confidence!