

How do I play better solos?

Making a speech	Improvising a solo
<p><u>PREPARATION</u></p> <p>Cue cards, imagination, memory</p> <p>Mark up your cue cards with pauses and what to emphasize. Write like you talk - have a few main ideas - use short sentences</p> <p>Who is the audience? Sunday afternoon passerbys, school pupils, businesspeople?</p> <p>Don't memorize an entire speech - know the main points and some of its smaller information. This way you can go to the main points</p> <p><u>STRUCTURE</u></p> <p>Introduction - needs to grab the audience's attention</p> <p>Tell them what you're going to tell them - listener's have to get your points the first time; explaining your main point quickly helps the audience know what to listen for. Start with your most important point, then the weakest leading to strongest</p> <p>Add stats, facts, examples, anecdotes, quotes etc. Link your intro, points and conclusion together with smooth transitions</p> <p>Conclusion - end with a bang - leave people with a lasting impression / feeling excited - summarize your points, restate the main purpose</p> <p><u>DELIVERY</u></p> <p>Say it out loud - don't mumble</p> <p>Avoid tongue twisters</p>	<p>Leadsheet, imagination, memory</p> <p>A solo is sound AND space. Phrase ideas into 2 or 4 bars.</p> <p>Students in a masterclass, seasoned jazz listeners, Kenny G fans?</p> <p>I've tried memorizing entire solos. It doesn't really work because you concentrate too much on the right notes and forget the 'spirit' and momentum of it</p> <p>Use pickups, cadenzas, lead breaks into solo</p> <p>Try motifs. Motifs can be simple short melodies or an interesting interval played as a sequence. 'Weak' ideas are characterized by poor timing, overuse of technically 'easy' scales (such as the blues scales) and many digital patterns</p> <p>Include classic licks, riffs, and patterns. These are the equivalent of musical anecdotes and quotes. Cadences such as ii-V7s represent transition points and should be considered as such</p> <p>Build your solo to a final high point – repeat the original motif, now more developed than the original. Use dynamics, repetition and a final run up to a sustained high note</p> <p>Limit technically-able but emotionally barren solos featuring fast 8th note runs without dynamic contrast. This is the equivalent of mumbling. Record yourself to check on this</p> <p>Complex passages involving extreme intervals and dissonances aren't necessarily easy to listen to. Think of the context and purpose of your solo</p>

Pause briefly after the main points to allow audience time to absorb info

Fewer words = clearer point

Don't move around, take a deep breath, project your voice and don't read into you cue cards

Don't just read to the audience – speak to them. A speech read is a speech dead

Express your ideas in a creative and persuasive way

How you say it is as important as what you say – commanding language expresses authority

Pronounce words clearly, vary your speed, pitch and volume to keep the delivery lively

ATTITUDE

If you need anything in a speech, it is **passion**. If you aren't interested in giving a speech, then your audience will be bored.

Silence gives the audience a chance to hear your ideas and 'follow your story'

Fewer notes = clearer solo

Don't include everything you know in a solo. It's not a test, but instantaneous art.

Keep your head up so you don't restrict the airflow. Try not to play into the music stand – it reduces your sound.

Ditto solos. You're making an emotional connection and telling a story. If you find yourself playing digital patterns, ask yourself – how exciting is reading the phonebook aloud?

Your solo is an emotional trip for the listener. Make it go somewhere and let the audience enjoy the journey!

Listen to any of the greats - Cotrane, Brecker, Adderley, Rollins – and consider how they phrase, articulate, and use dynamics to emphasize ideas.

Articulate clearly, use time - e.g. play ahead or behind beat, across the barlines- use a wide tessitura and dynamics.

Ditto solos. If you play in a half-hearted manner expect an indifferent response from the audience.