

The Eloquent Woman: Checklist for the speaker's wardrobe

This list started with the wardrobe questions from my popular [Checklist for the whole speaker](#) (it's also a free download). Once you get used to working your way through this checklist, you'll find yourself making smarter wardrobe choices for your speaking engagements and presentations automatically. And by the way, this checklist works for men and women. Here it is:

- Are my clothes clean, pressed and mended?
- Are they likely or unlikely to look wrinkled after a short time?
- Do my clothes suit the occasion at which I'm speaking?
- Do my clothes fit me?
- Is my intended outfit comfortable, from head to toe?
- Will my wardrobe allow me (if needed) to do things like crawl under a table to plug in a cord or reach high to point at a chart?
- Have I rehearsed my presentation movements and gestures while wearing my intended outfit?
- Am I [using color to my advantage](#)? Will it help me stand out in the setting or work against me?
- Is there anything about my outfit that will distract me? Distract my audience? If so, can I make a change? Is it worth it?
- If I plan to gesture, have I removed rings and bracelets that may be visible or audible distractions?
- If I'm going to wear a lavalier mic, do I have a lapel or collar on which to clip it? Will it be easy to hide the wire under my jacket, and to clip the pack on my waistband or pocket?
- If I'm standing behind a lectern, or will be seated behind a skirted table, have I focused attention and color near my face?
- What from my outfit will be seen in that setting by the audience? (For example, small jewelry might not be visible at all, and more attention will be focused on your upper torso and face.)
- If I'm on a panel, will the table be skirted? Am I sitting in a big armchair? Have I thought about how my outfit will look when I'm seated and facing the audience?
- If I have white hair, gray hair, light hair or no hair, am I wearing a dark suit to bring my face into focus?

- Am I wearing a [French blue](#) color near my face (shirt, scarf or tie) -- the color that flatters all skin tones?
- Have I inquired about the color of the background that will be behind me, so I can make sure my suit doesn't blend in--or clash?
- If my talk is being recorded on video--whether on television or for another purpose--have I avoided wearing clothes that will appear to bleed at the edges on camera (like a red jacket), clothes that will draw the viewer's focus away from my face (like a white shirt) or clothes that will look like it's moving on its own (like a checked or plaid shirt or jacket)?
- If I'm going to walk in and around the audience, have I considered what will be visible to someone who's seated and in front of or behind me?