On Speeches, Notes, and Writing

It's best to practice a presentation enough times so that you're familiar with the material to fluidly present without a script or copious notes, but if you still want to keep some of your speech on paper, follow these basic tips:

**Put that poetry class to use**
Look to poetry for some good advice for line breaks; where you feel you would naturally pause in speaking, apply enjambment, or start a new line, like this:

Hello everyone  
I hope you're well  
--and enjoying this lovely weather! 
I appreciate you being here today.

¾ limit
If you type out your notes, don't go farther down than 3/4 of the page. It will be too tempting to write out the speech word-for-word if you do more--which will make you sound like a boring robot when you speak--and will prevent effective eye contact.

**Use those writing utensils**
For marking reference points in case you forget your spot, emphasizing certain words and points, or making sure to watch pronunciation, enunciation, etc., apply your pen and highlighter when going over your presentation notes.
Robots are cool--but not when public speaking
As aforementioned, try not to write out the speech verbatim to prevent monotonous reading. Use bullet points, outline style, or trigger words, instead.

Smooth ride
Organize your speech so that the movements from section-to-section are as fluid as possible. Avoid having to turn a page mid-section, point, or thought.

If you want more information, check out the following UMW Speaking Center Handouts:

Presentation Notes