

Communicating science toolkit: Giving a presentation

“In all things success depends on previous preparation, and without such preparation there is sure to be failure.”

Confucius

Why do we make presentations? What is the general purpose of a presentation?

- To inform
- To persuade
- To communicate some idea, concept, or method to an audience

We make presentations for:

- ✓ Thesis and Dissertation defense
- ✓ Conference talks
- ✓ Course lectures and assignments
- ✓ Presentations to employers/colleagues/our classmates

What should a good presentation have? What should we do in almost any presentation for disseminating research? Here are some suggested answers:

1. Describe the background to the research
 - ✓ Define key terms
 - ✓ Outline other relevant findings
2. Describe the **specific questions** the research is addressing
3. **Briefly** describe the experimental method
4. Describe the **most important** results
5. **Discuss** how these results relate to other findings
6. Discuss the **wider implications** of the results/future studies/any criticism you have
7. **Conclusion**
8. **References** can be added



In order to produce a good presentation you should have clear AIMS:

WHAT IS THE MAIN MESSAGE OF THE PRESENTATION?

For example, to tell an audience about your research study in the Albufera Park in Valencia; the interviews carried out there; results related to pollution, etc. .

Points to consider:

1. Why you chose this topic
2. What you know about it
3. What you think your audience knows about it

So, to tell an audience about your research, you should be able to:

- Organise and summarise the information you have in an effective way
- Communicate this information clearly
- Manage time efficiently

Respond appropriately to both predictable and unpredictable questions.

How can we organise the information? This depends on the subject matter/topic, but consider the following ways:

- Chronological sequence
- Most important or relevant to least important
- Looking at the more general aspects/results to more specific
- Making comparisons

Why use Power Point or Prezi?



- ✚ Helps you remember
- ✚ Helps them (the audience) remember
- ✚ Helps them understand
- ✚ Helps you keep to the point
- ✚ Helps to reduce your nervousness

Some useful tips:

- Aim for about 8 slides for a 15 minute talk.
- Do not put more than 4 or 5 pieces of information on each slide.
- Explain any tables or graphs you have included
- Avoid using transition effects and animations that are distracting
- It is better not to use notes, there is always a temptation to depend too much on them!

What to do before?

PLAN your talk!

- ✓ When preparing slides - use **big** letters and only key words.
- ✓ Check for **speling** errors – on a big screen it **LOOKS SO BAD**
- ✓ Practise a couple of times, perhaps in front of a class mate and check your time
- ✓ Know where you're going to give the presentation
- ✓ Try out the computer - make sure everything is working well



The Audience

Listening is difficult

- Your job is to make it easier by asking yourself if they have probably understood it.
 - ❖ Give the audience time to think
 - ❖ Don't talk nonstop: they don't know the material as well as you do
 - ❖ Figures and equations must be explained
 - ❖ New terminology and definitions need to be repeated
 - ❖ Remind the audience of key facts, definitions, etc.

The Beginning

- Tell the audience who you are, what you are going to speak about - the structure of your presentation
- Capture their interest - say why it is going to be interesting/relevant for them
- Be brief
- Body language - smile, look at the audience, keep eye contact
- Any handouts? Questions – when can questions be asked? During or after the presentation?

❖ Some language tips BEGINNING

Introduction

- Good morning everybody /ladies and gentlemen/
- I'm going to talk about..... /I'm here today to tell you about....
- The subject of my talk is....

Outline (structure of talk)

- This talk is divided into 4 parts/ Let me begin with.../ Firstly.../secondly.../ lastly .../ and finally

Schedule (how long?)

- My presentation will take about 10 minutes.....

Inviting questions

- If anyone has any questions, feel free to ask at any time.../ At the end of my talk there will be a question and answer session.../I'll be pleased to answer any questions you have at the end...

The Middle/the main part of your presentation

- Have 3 or 4 main points only - the audience will not remember any more!
- Take about 80% of the total time for the main part of your talk
- It helps to have a laser pointer and use it to highlight items
- Summarise occasionally
- Use signposts... Next I'd like to turn to...

❖ Some language tips MIDDLE

Part one

- Let's start with... Firstly...

Moving on....

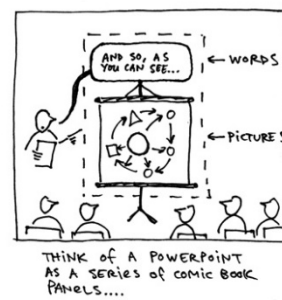
- I'd now like to move on to.../ This brings me to...

Asking check up questions

- Is everyone with me?/ Is that clear to everyone? /Before I go on are there any questions about ...?

Summarising

- Let me just sum up before we move on to the next point.../ So....we can say.../ To summarise../ In short...



The Ending

- Summarise the main points
- Don't present new ideas and be brief
- Leave time for questions - give out handouts now (or at beginning)
 - Repeat questions for the benefit of the audience (and to give yourself extra thinking time)
 - Be honest when answering questions, especially if you have no idea of the answer
 - Don't be afraid to ask the questioner to be clearer or to repeat part or all of the question
- Thank the audience for their attention

❖ Some language tips ENDING

Ending

- Let me finish by saying.../ Finally .../ There are two conclusions or results

Closing

- Thanking you for your attention.../ Thank you for listening

Questions

- If you have any questions or comments, I'd be happy to answer them now.../



Verbal Presentation Style

- ✓ Speak clearly and slowly loud enough to be heard
- ✓ This is especially needed for non-native speakers
- ✓ Speak to the audience not to the screen, white board, or computer!!
- ✓ Point to the screen (NOT to the computer)
- ✓ Walk over, emphasize, and point
- ✓ Learn your talk point by point, not word by word. (Don't memorize or read your presentation!)
- ✓ Avoid colloquialisms ('sort of' or 'kind of')
- ✓ Try to avoid **erms** and **ums**



And on the last slide....

- ✓ Thank you for your attention.
- ✓ (Your name and email)

For further reference

How to improve skills and confidence

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5WT2vweFRY>

15 strategies for giving oral presentations

<https://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/professors-guide/2010/02/24/15-strategies-for-giving-oral-presentations>

How to give an awesome presentation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i68a6M5FFBc>