

Oral Presentation Guidelines

Dear Students,

During the course of this seminar, each of you will be involved in giving two types of presentations: an individual paper presentation and a group case study presentation. Below you will find some guidelines designed to help you to effectively deliver both of these presentations.

- The individual paper presentation should be about 20 minutes in length. Here, you will present the research article assigned to you.
- The group presentation should be about 15-20 minutes in length, which you can divide up amongst your group members. This presentation will contain your description and analysis of the case study assigned to you.

Before you begin...

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Why am I making this speech? (Note: "Because I was told to" is not a sufficient answer.) You want to be able to answer for yourself, 'What is the purpose of this speech?'. Different speeches can have different purposes such as to entertain, inform, persuade, or incite to action. The tone of your speech should reflect your purpose.
2. Who will be the audience? The tone of your speech should be appropriate to your audience. In the case of the two presentations you will be giving for this seminar, you do not have to give too much technical background information since you are presenting to your peers and your instructors, who are already quite knowledgeable in the field.
3. What do I want to accomplish with this speech? (Note: "I want to get it over with and get a grade" is also not a sufficient answer.) This means asking yourself what you want the results of your presentation to be in terms of what the audience takes away with them. What do you want them to think, know, feel, and do at the end of the speech? How do you want them to remember and use the information you've presented to them in their future lives?
4. What will the presentation environment/location be like? I.e., what equipment is available for me to use, and what equipment would be best to use to present my material? Normally, the equipment available to you consists of a laptop computer and beamer (for ppt presentations) and a slide projector. Flipchart and a dry board are usually available. As you prepare the case study with your group during the seminar, the latter equipment may be especially suited for the case presentation.

The Big Presentation Rule:

Tell them what you're going to tell them. Tell them. Tell them what you told them.

In other words, each presentation should have three parts: an introduction, body, and conclusion. This goes for both the individual and the group presentation, although how these sections will be divided and presented will depend on the type of presentation.

In the introduction, establish the question/problem at hand (usually stated in the title) and the key researchers (names). State briefly the leading theories, criticisms of the current theories, and make mention of methods and empirical evidence. Finally, briefly state your personal conclusions to it all.

The body is where you become specific about the items mentioned in your introduction. Here you will thoroughly describe the question/problem at hand, as well as the surrounding theories. It is more likely that you will not be able to present every detail of your study. On the one hand, it is necessary to present the methods used by the researchers as well as the results that they found and the implication of their results. On the other hand, do not bore your audience with cumbersome, irrelevant details. You will go into analysis of these components. Were the researcher's methods sound, or is there some room for improvement, and how? What about the results that they found, can those be interpreted in another way? Evaluate, interpret, and criticize all components of the paper you are presenting. Finally, give your overall judgment of the topic at hand. How has this topic impacted your life, your culture and environment? Make it your personal issue, and present that part of yourself to the audience.

The conclusion has certain features to it as well. First, but not only, is to summarize the material you have already presented. Once again, state the question/problem at hand, the theories surrounding it, the methods and results that were given, etc. Second, in the conclusion it is important to discuss the relevance of the topic to the audience. Why is this important, what important assumptions can be made from this study. What implications do these assumptions have for the current environment, work setting, job market, Government, etc.? Finally, what could be done in the future to improve upon this research and the knowledge of the topic? What objections can be raised from any of the results presented, and to your judgments of the implications of the results?

Remember that a good presentation contains *exposition* (presenting facts), *analysis* (presenting an interpretation of those facts) and *communication* (presenting effectively).

Delivering an Effective Oral Presentation

Verbal communication (i.e., how to speak during your speech)

1. Don't simply read off a sheet of paper. It is always better to have your speech committed to memory as much as possible.
2. Slow down, don't speak too fast. Pace yourself.

3. Try not to speak in a monotone voice, it becomes tedious to the listeners and they will stop listening. Be interested and enthusiastic about your topic, and your audience will be, too.
4. Speak articulately (no mumbling) and sufficiently loud.
5. Don't worry about small silent pauses within your speech (the kind everyone naturally needs in order to collect their thoughts). It gives the audience time to process what has been said thus far.
6. Be sure that you have memorized important titles, names of authors, etc, and how to properly pronounce such things. Write them down and keep them handy.
7. Try to avoid using too many **verbal** pauses (such as "uh" "um" and the like). It can be distracting.
8. Address the audience in a friendly and personable way.
9. If you are giving a group presentation, introduce the next speaker when called for.

Non-verbal communication (i.e. how to behave during your speech)

1. Make frequent eye contact. Look at the people you are speaking to.
2. Try to avoid unnecessary hand motions, shuffling of papers, fidgeting with clothing, cracking your knuckles, etc.
3. Use confident body posture. Don't slouch your shoulders. Keep your head up and facing the audience. Try to avoid balancing back and forth on either foot, swinging your arms, swinging your legs, other nervous gestures.

Making use of note cards

1. The best advice for using note cards is to be sure you are very familiar with your topic. Note cards should serve only to help you keep track of your location within your speech.
2. Use note cards that are easy to read. Write legibly and large. Avoid overcrowding on your note cards or else you will find yourself lost in reading.
3. Arrange them in the order of your presentation.

Timing your speech

1. Generally, prepare a speech that when ran through cold turkey (without an audience) will take up about 75-80% of the time allotted to you. This will allow for unexpected incidents during the actual presentation.
2. It's a good idea to make a time-map outline of your speech on a single sheet of paper. For a 20 minute presentation, your outline would look something like the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| • Introduce myself | 20 seconds |
| • Introduce my topic | 3 minutes |
| • Main body of my speech | 10 minutes |
| • Conclusions | 3 minutes |

Of course, your outline should be a bit more detailed than this, with points under each of these bullets.

Visual aids (ppt presentation and slides)

1. A good rule of thumb is to have one slide for every two minutes of your presentation.
2. Provide paper copies of your slides to each member of your audience. You can fit two slides to a page, to conserve paper.
3. Naturally, the slides should follow the same organization as your speech.
4. When using visual aids, good organization, fonts of different and sufficient (large) sizes and different colors will catch viewers' eyes.
5. Self-made displays have been shown to be more effective than simply copying illustrations from a textbook.
6. A picture says a thousand words: i.e., a good illustration (with a clear and informative heading) will speak for itself, so make use of them for optimal clarity and understanding.
7. Make sure that each slide is not too cluttered with words, or with too many illustrations. Keep it simple.

Handouts

1. Handouts should be self-descriptive; i.e., people should be able to understand your handouts even without hearing the actual presentation.
2. It is not necessary that all points of the speech be covered in your handouts. However, it is advisable that any tables and diagrams contain a longer and more detailed description within the handouts, so that the audience can use their own time to further understand the material you are presenting.
3. The contents of the handouts should not exceed more than 5 pages of the actual slides presented
4. Appropriate references should be fully documented within the handouts.
5. A good bit of advice is to include your own recommended points of discussion, related topics, and ideas to ponder within the handouts, so the audience can continue to engage with your topic once your speech is over.

Transitions

When making a group presentation, it is a good idea to switch speakers naturally when the topic within the speech itself changes.

Feedback

Generally, the best preparation for handling questions and feedback is for you to be fully familiar with your topic and also to anticipate questions that your audience might have.