

Presentations

Study Guide

This is a general guide to giving an oral presentation. Course requirements may vary within different courses so please check with your lecturer.

WHAT IS A PRESENTATION?

You may be asked to prepare your assignment topic as a presentation. In this case will be required to present your topic in person to an audience, usually your class. You will need to:

- Present your work on your topic orally
- Persuade your listeners of your viewpoint
- Maintain the audience's interest

Like essays, they share three main parts:

- The **introduction** – give general information and background on your topic. This is where you say what you set out to do and give some idea of the overall content
- The **body** – identify, describe and demonstrate the information you have gathered on your topic. Direct the audience to the aspects you want them to notice
- The **conclusion** – summarise the key elements you've highlighted.

PREPARING YOUR PRESENTATION

How long should my talk be?

Begin by knowing how much material you will need for your presentation. You should aim at speaking only 100 words per minute. Your audience will also need time to view any visuals you include. If you are expected to speak for 15 minutes for example you need about 1500 words.

First draft

Choose your topic. Consider how your material relates to the topic and learning objectives. What are the essentials that need to be included? Do your research and write a draft, include tables, graphs and visuals which help convey your message. This will be the basis of the body of the presentation.

Redraft your material tailoring it to the type of presentation and your audience. Will this be an informal chat, a seminar discussion, or a more formal presentation? Does the audience already understand the major concepts or must you provide some background?

Keep in mind your central message and avoid jargon and slang terms.

Include references to your information sources – giving credit where credit is due.

Producing notes and adding an introduction and conclusion

Once you have drafted the body of your presentation, write your introduction, outlining the topic and your point of view. Turn your draft into notes. Write down the key words and phrases – this will ensure you speak to the audience (rather than read to them).

Your conclusion will then flow from this. Summarise the main concepts you've discussed, and how your work relates to issues you've raised.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Computer-based presentation programs (eg Microsoft PowerPoint, Keynote, [Google Drive Presentation](#), [Prezi](#), [Powtoon](#)) can help you to formulate and structure your presentation. Visuals can easily be incorporated into the presentation.

VISUALS are important but they need to be RELEVANT.

Beware of too many gimmicks ... these can detract from your message.

PREPARING TO PRESENT

- Rehearse and practice with the technology you are using until you feel confident with your presentation, your timing and your body language. Practicing in front of a mirror or a friend may help.
- Proof-read your visuals and handouts
- Anticipate the questions that may be asked and prepare possible answers
- Check the venue – ensure your computer files are compatible with the venue version or take your own laptop.

DELIVERY

- Arrive early to make sure that the venue, equipment and lay-out suit your needs
- A few deep breathes can help to control your nerves before you get started
- Greet the audience, look confident and relaxed, introduce yourself and any co-presenters
- Establish eye contact with the audience, face them as much as possible
- Speak in a natural conversational style with a moderate rate of speech

Aim to...	Avoid ...
Proof read all handouts/visuals	Typos, slang, acronyms (initials instead of words)
Talk	Read
Stand	Sit
Move	Stand still
Vary your pitch and speak clearly	Speak too fast or quietly in a monotone or mumble
Make eye contact	Stare at the floor
Use visuals	Use no visuals or too many gimmicks
Rehearse and stay on time	No rehearsal and run overtime
Summarise your main points at the end	End abruptly
Seek feedback and involve your audience	Ignore your audience

FEEDBACK

Provide a simple feedback sheet for your audience to fill out.

For further help with presentations, speak to your campus Learning Support or Library staff, and try these sites for further information

RMIT University <https://emedia.rmit.edu.au/learninglab/content/oral-presentations>

University of Melbourne <https://students.unimelb.edu.au/academic-skills/explore-our-resources/learning-online/presenting-online>

William Angliss Institute <https://libguides.angliss.edu.au/researchskillstips/presentations>