

General Guide for Oral Presentations

Plan on having 10 minutes for your presentation at the Conference, and five minutes afterwards for the Question and Answer session.

I. Evaluate the Rhetorical Situation

Assess the Occasion

- Does the occasion call for a certain format or style? (in/formal, etc.)
- What is the context? (classroom presentation, conference, board meeting, etc.)
- What will the environment be? (kind of room, number of people, etc.)

Define your purpose

- What are your goals? (to inform, to persuade, call for action)
- How do you want to affect the audience?

Size up the audience

- Who are the listeners? What is their relationship to you?
- What do they know about the topic?
- What beliefs, values, expectations are they likely to have about the topic?

II. Organize the Presentation

Beginning

1. Establish your credibility. Project good will towards the audience and knowledge about your topic.
2. Interest the audience.
 - Give an anecdote
 - Use brief humor or a witty remark
 - Say something startling or unexpected
 - Ask a rhetorical question
 - Give a brief demonstration
 - Involve the audience in doing something
3. Outline the main and supporting points you will make.

Middle

1. Elaborate on the points you previewed in the introduction.
2. Draw the audience's attention to the main points.

Ending

1. Restate the points.
2. Relate the significance of your topic to a broader context.

3. Personalize the message for the audience.
4. Provide a sense of closure.

III. Using Resources Wisely

Time

- Make sure you know how much time you have.
- Build in a contingency plan in case you have less or more time than you planned.

Environment

- Evaluate the physical features of the room.
- Check out what kinds of equipment are available.

Visual Aids

- Appeal to the audience's senses to help them understand and remember the message.
 - Computer presentations
 - White boards
 - Handouts
 - Slides/Photos
 - Videos
 - Overhead transparencies
 - Posterboards
 - Objects and models

III. Delivery

Memory Support

- Memorization--may make you more confident, but also may end up being inflexible and monotonous.
- Note cards or outline--reminds you of key points, allows you to maintain good eye contact.
- Full manuscript--technique usually used at professional conferences. Formal.

Appropriate Dress

- Professional clothing, hairstyle, jewelry, and grooming are all important in forming a good impression.

Voice Qualities

- Volume--practice projecting your voice to make sure you are loud enough.
- Pitch--vary the pitch to avoid monotony. Low pitch implies drama and solemnity, high pitch imparts urgency.
- Pace--slow pace to emphasize points or discuss complex issues. Speed up pace to show excitement or cover simpler points.

- Articulation--pronounce words clearly and distinctly.

Nonverbal Communication

- Eye contact--keeps audience's attention, shows poise and confidence, allows you to monitor audience's reaction.
- Gestures--voluntary gestures can emphasize a point.
- Facial expressions--relax your face, smile.
- Posture--standing up straight will make you appear confident and give you more air to project your voice.