

## Preparing an Oral Presentation

An oral presentation gives students an opportunity to present a summary of their findings on a research question. A professor may assign oral presentations so that students engage with a topic and learn to reduce their findings to fit within the time constraints of oral presentations. In addition, these assignments allow students to become more confident and organized speakers.

Although such an assignment can be overwhelming, breaking it down into steps can help turn this project into a rewarding experience. See Sample Oral Presentation Timeline and Example of a Student Using Task Analysis for an Oral Presentation for additional help.

### 1. Understand the assignment

- Find out criteria and who will be grading: the professor, TA and/or students?
- What is expected of you and what do you want to learn?
- Analyze your purpose: To inform, persuade, motivate...

### 2. Choose a topic

- Assess your audience's interest in and knowledge of the topic
- Choose something you are interested in

### 3. Assess resource requirements

- What do you already know; what questions do you have?
- What other information do you need and where can you find it? Do you need Census stats, pictures, or info on how to do PowerPoint?

### 4. Gather information

- What kind of information do you need: definition, description, analogy, example, statistics, and/or testimony?
- Is the information useful to the presentation? Does it add to the thesis (your central idea)? Is it credible?

### 5. Determine your presentation style

- Once you have gathered the necessary info, how do you want to present it?
- What kind of organizational pattern do you want to create for your presentation: informative or persuasive?
- See Brock University link at the end of this tip sheet for more info on presentation styles.

## **6. Create an outline**

- As in an essay, you should have an introduction, body, and conclusion.
- Create a working thesis statement.

## **7. Revise and fill the gaps**

- Are my ideas clearly and logically ordered?
- Is the presentation arranged chronologically?
- Is the presentation easy to follow?
- What do I want to change?

## **8. Prepare visual aids**

- Use visuals that support what you are saying and keep them simple. If they cannot be easily seen and understood, they will only confuse rather than enlighten

## **9. Prepare for possible questions from the audience**

- Anticipate possible questions and prepare responses if there will be a question period at the end of your presentation.

## **10. Read script for timing and edit to fit time constraints**

- Be sure to stay within time constraints; some professors will penalize for either going over or under the given time.
- Try to plan for 80% of the allotted time to account for any delays.

## **11. Rehearse speech**

- Decide what method of delivery you will use: memorized, read, impromptu, or extemporaneous (see University of Minnesota link for more information). This last method is the preferred method because it maximizes eye contact with the audience; you use notecards to prompt you, so you won't forget and you avoid reading too much. However, choose whichever method you perform best.

## **12. Practice speech with technology**

- Make sure everything works smoothly.
- Work to maintain fairly consistent eye contact with the audience rather than shifting focus too heavily to the visuals and allow audience time to understand the visuals.

### 13. Practice relaxation strategies

- Deep breathing and a well-rehearsed presentation will turn nervousness into positive energy
- Be aware of your voice (rate of speech, tone and volume) and non-verbal communication (nervous habits)

### Resources

<https://brocku.ca/rlc2017/wp-content/uploads/sites/135/Presentation-Styles-and-Tips.pdf>

Brock University on *Presentation Styles and Tips*

<https://open.lib.umn.edu/publicspeaking/chapter/14-1-four-methods-of-delivery/>

The University of Minnesota – *Four Methods of Delivery*

<https://rogeriofvieira.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/OralPresentation.pdf>

The Rice OWL on *Designing Effective Oral Presentations*

<https://www.unisq.edu.au/library/study-support/assignments-and-exams/assignment-structure-and-writing/presentations>

The University of Southern Queensland on *Presentations*