

ORAL PRESENTATIONS

PREPARING FOR THE ORAL PRESENTATION

- What are the audience's expectations?
 - How long should it be?
 - What is your goal, to persuade? Inform? Critique?
 - How much do they know about your topic?
 - What do they expect to know after?
- Research:
 - The occasion for your speech? Is it formal or informal?
 - The location (Consider the size of the room. Will you be on stage? Will you have to use a microphone? Powerpoint?)

GENERAL OUTLINE FOR THE PRESENTATION

Introduction:

- Attention-getter (i.e., story related to the topic)
- Topic (Thesis Statement - your angle on the topic)
- Overview
- Personal comment on the topic

Discussion:

- Presentation of details and facts
- Arrange in a logical order. Divide your presentation into clear sections.
- Pay attention to transitions from one idea to another. It's a good idea to pause between main sections of your presentation.
- Use visual support to illustrate your commentary.
- Use vivid language to help the audience identify with and experience your topic.
- Humour may be a disaster or a success. It will depend on your delivery. Don't use humour unless you are confident that you will be able to carry it off.

Conclusion:

- Cue your audience: "In conclusion"
- Summarize your main points.
- Save a good point or story for a dramatic finish.
- Don't overextend your welcome.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD SPEAKER

A good speaker is:

1. Prepared

- Practice your presentation for voice, language, and timing. This will help you work through any language problems. (Some phrases look great on paper but are tongue twisters in actual speech.) You will also be able to identify any bad habits, such clearing

your throat or adding "ahs" and "ahems." As well, you will be able to work out any gestures so they will look natural.

- Do not read your presentation. You could use file cards as prompt cards. Reduce your written copy to key phrases and points.
- If a question & answer period is part of the presentation, try to anticipate possible questions and have answers ready.
- Visualize your performance. This will help build your confidence and cut down on the nervousness.

2. Confident

- Do not begin with an apology for your lack of knowledge or your English. If you lack confidence in yourself, the audience will perceive this and lose confidence in you too.
- Be thoroughly prepared and familiar with your material; preparation creates confidence.
- Pause occasionally. Never be afraid to stop speaking for a moment.
- Speak at a normally slow rate. Do not rush.

3. Responsive

- Start your presentation with a smile. This will put your audience at ease.
- Make eye contact with members of the audience. Don't talk to the back wall or your notes. Find a few friendly, encouraging faces in the different parts of the audience and talk to them.
- Check to see whether the audience is following you.
- Make sure you talk with, not at, your audience. Talking at an audience comes across as talking down to those involved.

4. Organised

- The introduction should contain your thesis - what you want to say about your topic.
- The points of the body should be logically arranged with adequate detail or examples to back up your main points.
- The conclusion should summarize the main points.
- Transitions should be used to help the listener as you move from point to point.

5. Clear

- Make sure that the organization of your talk is clear to the audience.
- Make short, simple, and specific statements.
- You could use the blackboard or an overhead to present the outline of your talk or to clarify difficult points.

6. Enthusiastic

- When something is important, say it slowly and loudly.
- Communicate your own interest in, and enthusiasm for, your subject; enthusiasm is contagious!