



Checklists for students

Identifying the audience

Checklist: Identifying the audience	
Who will be in the audience? (e.g., lecturer, peers, colleagues, potential employers, practising professionals, general public)	
What will the audience already know about the subject? (lots, a bit, not much)	
Will they be interested in it? Why should they be?	
What will they expect from the presentation?	
How much background should I present so that they will understand the current situation?	
Has anyone else talked to them about this subject, and if so, what did they say? Can I build on what has gone before?	
Will they be receptive or hostile towards the subject? How will I deal with this?	
Will they know anything about me? What will they need to know?	
Should my presentation be formal or informal?	

Structuring the information

Ideas to structure a presentation	
A summary statement	Express the topic in one clear statement that captures the essence of the presentation. All supporting evidence should hang off this one clear statement.
An ordering principle	Choose an ordering principle for the presentation (e.g., a sequential order; a cause-effect order; a pyramid order - from big to small ideas; or an inverted pyramid order - from small to big ideas).
A logical structure using sections	Introduction Body Conclusion
Linking ideas and transitions	Link ideas in the various sections together with connecting or transitional words such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, I'd like to deal with... • My second point is... • When I've dealt with these points I will... • And finally...



ORAL COMMUNICATION

Preparing an oral presentation

Checklist for preparing an oral presentation	
Question	Yes/No
Is my introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short? • Attention-getting? Does it: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce the topic thoroughly? • Flag the direction of the presentation? • Establish my own credibility? 	
Does the body of my presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stick to the basic theme? • Present relevant evidence? • Flow logically? 	
Does my conclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarise the main points? • Draw all my arguments and evidence together? • Point forwards or suggest work still to be done? 	

Before delivering the presentation...

Consider each of the following delivery methods	
Memorising	Avoid trying to memorise an entire speech. You're likely to forget your lines and the speech can sound stiff and stilted. However, memorising a quotation, an opening paragraph, or a few concluding remarks can bolster your confidence and strengthen your delivery.
Reading	You may wish to read technical information, policy statements or items where the wording must be accurate. If you choose to read your speech, practise so that you can still maintain eye contact with the audience. Use double- or triple-spaced copy, wide margins and large type.
Speaking from notes	Use an outline, note cards, or visual aids. This is probably the most effective and the easiest delivery mode. It gives you something to refer to and still allows for eye contact and interaction with the audience.
Impromptu speaking	Avoid speaking unprepared unless you've spoken many times on the same topic, or are an extremely good public speaker. If you have to speak 'off the cuff,' take a few minutes to think through what you you're going to say.

Adapted from: Thill, J., & Bovee, C. (1999). *Excellence in Business Communication*. (4th ed). New Jersey: Prentice Hall.



Making a good impression on the audience

Nail your first three minutes to avoid going down in flames

The first three minutes of any presentation are the most important. Consider beginning with a startling fact, joke, question, quotation or story.

Question: Asking a challenging question is one of the most basic ways of getting an audience's attention.

Tell a good joke or anecdote: Ensure the joke or anecdote is appropriate to the audience, and the subject of the presentation.

Tell a story: Use a story that is related to the presentation. Use your own experience. Use an experience the audience can relate to.

Facts and quotations: Use facts or quotations that relate to the topic and to the audience.

Memorise the opening: If you have the first three minutes of your presentation word-, intonation- and gesture-perfect, you can be more informal with the remainder of the presentation.

Adapted from: Hall, J. *Nail your first three minutes to avoid going down in flames*. 3M Meeting Network Articles & Advice. (Retrieved from the World Wide Web 16 September 2004)
http://www.mmm.com/meetingnetwork/presentations/pmag_three_minutes.html

Establish a dialogue with your audience

- **Ask a direct question** to one member of the audience – it's better than just making a statement to begin with and puts the focus on the audience – not you.
- **Make a startling statement** or ask a provocative question – then lead into your main points.
- **Describe a shared experience** – one that connects the speaker and the audience, e.g., “Where were you when you heard about JFK's assassination?”
- **Give the latest news** - something that will get the audience into a good mood, wanting to listen to you.
- **Ask your audience to do something** – take a show of hands, stand and stretch, tell one another's names, imagine something vivid, and relate it to the talk which is going to follow.
- **Relate an anecdote or tell a joke** – if they are funny and appropriate to audience and topic. Be careful.
- **Give a demonstration** – use props.
- **Ask a barrage of questions** (perhaps using visuals) – lots of questions about the same thing.

Adapted from: Wilder, L. (1999) *7 Steps to Fearless Speaking*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.



Delivering an oral presentation

Going live

Here are some suggestions that may assist your students in their actual delivery.

Helpful hints

- You have about 30 seconds to make a good impression and establish your credibility as a speaker;
- Unless you can engage your audience quickly, you'll lose them;
- You need to tell them what you are going to tell them, then tell them, and then tell them what you have told them;
- Try explaining the topic of your presentation, before the presentation, to someone who doesn't know anything about it, and see if they get the message;
- Use a mental picture of your presentation to help establish the 'flow';
- Keep checking your presentation to see which section contains what information;
- Use transitions as 'signposts' to show the audience where you've come from, where you are now, and where you are going next;
- Look directly out into the audience, and focus on one or two faces to begin with;
- Raise your head so your voice projects into the audience;
- Ask questions immediately and listen to the answers;
- Use hand and eye gestures when appropriate, usually for emphasis;
- Use your whole body to express enthusiasm and energy; and
- Try smiling!

Why not:

- Ask a searching question;
- Make a challenging statement;
- Relate a story or anecdote for illustration
- Stress your main points repeatedly;
- Use simple language; and
- To conclude, ask a rhetorical question, if you know the answer!



Dealing with questions

Handling questions

Practice makes perfect

- Rehearse in advance, with friends or colleagues, some of the kinds of questions that you think the audience might ask, so you can prepare answers;
- Questions can be unnerving if they are unexpected. However, you can always admit that while you don't know the answer right now, you can follow it up later;
- Ask the questioner to restate the question if it's not clear;
- Thank them for the question;
- Repeat it back to them (this clarifies it and allows you time to think), and then give an answer; and
- Don't overwhelm the questioner with information in response.

Be prepared

- React to the question – look at the person asking the question – nod your head – acknowledge the question;
- Let the questioner finish – resist the temptation to jump in;
- Rephrase the question – gives audience the chance to hear question, helps you clarify and gives you time to respond;
- Respond to everyone – start with eye contact with the questioner then address your answer to the whole audience;
- Refer to the central theme of the speech – reinforce your key points;
- Respect the questioner – say it's a good question. Disagree (if necessary) without being disagreeable;
- Feel free to postpone an answer – don't feel obliged to know the answer. Be honest;
- Throw the question back to the group – either for an answer you don't know – or to continue engaging the audience;
- Pause strategically – gives you and the audience time to think. Allow time for questions to be raised; and
- Be a sleuth. Watch and listen to your audience – are they getting it? Watch body language. Respond accordingly.

Richardson, D. *Don't take Q&A sessions for granted: Be prepared.* 3M Meeting Network. Articles & Advice. (Retrieved from the Web 16 September 2004)
http://www.mmm.com/meetingnetwork/presentations/pmag_qa_session.html



Visual aids

Use of visual aids

Some tips for using visual aids:

- Have everything you will need arranged in front of you;
- Check the technology beforehand;
- If using PowerPoint, make sure you have the slides on a duplicate disk and as OHTs – it's amazing how often technology doesn't work;
- Only include five or six bulleted lines per slide;
- Use each slide to demonstrate one idea;
- Allow about two minutes per slide to explain the main points (longer, if statistics need to be explained);
- Provide hard copy handouts so that the audience has a record of the presentation afterwards;
- Check that the audience can read the slide or OHT; and
- Use a large font size, e.g., **24** or **28** or **36**.

Some relevant material is available at

Designing Effective Visuals:

http://www.kumc.edu/SAH/OTEd/jradel/Effective_visuals/VisStrt.html

Making Overhead Transparencies:

<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/tutsem4.html>



Using criteria sheets for assessing oral presentations

A criteria sheet for assessing students' oral presentations				
	1	2	3	4
Organisation	Audience cannot understand presentation because there is no sequence of information.	Audience has difficulty following presentation because student jumps around.	Student presents information in logical sequence which audience can follow.	Student presents information in logical, interesting sequence which audience can follow.
Subject knowledge	Student does not have grasp of information; student cannot answer questions about subject.	Student is uncomfortable with information and is able to answer only rudimentary questions.	Student is at ease with expected answers to all questions, but fails to elaborate.	Student demonstrates full knowledge (more than required) by answering all class questions with explanations and elaboration.
Communication aids	Student uses superfluous aids or no aids.	Student occasionally uses aids that rarely support text and presentation.	Student's aids relate to text and presentation.	Student's aids explain and reinforce screen text and presentation.
Mechanics	Student's presentation has four or more spelling errors and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has three misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no more than two misspellings and/or grammatical errors.	Presentation has no misspellings or grammatical errors.
Eye contact	Student reads all of report with no eye contact.	Student occasionally uses eye contact, but still reads most of report.	Student maintains eye contact most of the time but frequently returns to notes.	Student maintains eye contact with audience, seldom returning to notes.
Oral delivery	Student mumbles, incorrectly pronounces terms, and speaks too quietly for students in the back of class to hear.	Student's voice is low. Student incorrectly pronounces terms. Audience members have difficulty hearing presentation.	Student's voice is clear. Student pronounces most words correctly. Most audience members can hear presentation.	Student uses a clear voice and correct, precise pronunciation of terms so that all audience members can hear presentation.
Personal appearance	Personal appearance is inappropriate for the occasion and intended audience.	Some aspects of appearance reflect a lack of sensitivity to nuances of the occasion.	Personal appearance is generally appropriate for the occasion and audience.	Personal appearance is completely appropriate for the occasion and the audience.
Questions	Responds to questions inadequately.	Misses some opportunities for interaction and does not always comfortably handle questions.	Generally responds to audience comments, questions and needs.	Consistently clarifies, restates, and responds to questions. Summarises when needed.

Adapted from: Presentation Rubric: <http://www.ncsu.edu/midlink/rub.pres.html> and

Schreyer Institute for Teaching Excellence Rubric: www.schreyerinstitute.psu.edu/pdf/oralCommRubric.pdf