

Guidelines for Oral Presentations

In some of your courses you may be asked to report on your academic or clinical experiences, or present the results of an assignment or project that you've been working on. If you're like many people, you may feel uncomfortable speaking in front of a group of people. Fortunately, you can increase your comfort level and skill in giving oral presentations by applying the following proven techniques.

1. Rehearse. If you have some advanced notice that you will be giving an oral presentation, it will help you to rehearse it ahead of time. When you do rehearse, remember to:

- work on one presentation skill at a time
- rehearse on your feet at least three times
- try to eliminate the "ums" and "ahs"
- keep your presentation length to 75% of the time allotted
- spend extra time on rehearsing the beginning and end of the presentation

2. Use pauses for maximum effect. Pauses are important. They not only help the audience process what you just said, they also help your listeners think about what you will say next. You should always pause when:

- emphasizing a point
- moving to face a different part of the audience
- changing overheads, flip charts or other visual aids

3. Work on your voice. There are various techniques you can use to increase vocal clarity:

- Try to elongate vowel sounds
- Make it a point to articulate the last letter of each word
- Practice deep breathing to develop vocal stamina

4. Using visual aids. When used properly, overhead transparencies, slides, and flip charts can be very helpful to your presentation. When used improperly, they can be a distraction. To ensure that you remain the center of attention during your presentation:

- Keep each visual simple, like a billboard
- Don't present a visual until you are ready to talk about it
- Remove a visual aid after you've finished talking about it
- Use progressive disclosure to expose a list of key points one at a time

Additional Resources

Note: Whenever possible, several links have been included to provide alternative resources. Keep in mind that the sheer volume of information available through the Internet makes it impossible to include all of the relevant electronic sources for a given course. You are therefore encouraged to search out additional resources on your own using the search option of your choice.

Beebe, S. A. (2005). *Public speaking : An audience-centered approach (6th ed.)*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon

Briscoe, M. H. (1996). *Preparing scientific illustrations : A guide to better posters, presentations, and publications*. New York: Springer-Verlag.

Hager, P. (2001). *Designing & delivering scientific, technical, and managerial presentations*. New York: John Wiley.

Morrisey, G. L. (1997). *Loud and clear : How to prepare and deliver effective business and technical presentations*. Boulder, CO: Perseus Books Group.

Robbins, J. (1997). *High-impact presentations : A multimedia approach*. New York: John Wiley.

Rocha, B (Ed.). (2004). *Getting over yourself : A guide to public speaking. (2nd ed.)* Bouldin Hill.

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[Effective Technical Presentations](#)