

Formal Presentation Tips

- Think about your audience, in this case, your fellow students. It is a mistake to direct your presentation to the professor as if he or she was the only one who matters.
- Know your material thoroughly. Try presenting your material to friends, oftentimes you become aware of “holes” in your understanding when you have to explain it to others.
- Put what you have to say in a logical sequence. There are several forms
 - The essay form mimics the essay form that all of you have learned as a way to present your ideas in writing. This means you will have a thesis, evidence, and conclusion (revisiting the thesis with summary remarks)
 - The sharing knowledge form – here you note that the knowledge you’ve attained is valuable (important, interesting, surprising, shocking, horrifying, funny, or entertaining) then you share the information point by point, starting with the point you find most important, interesting, etc. and ending with a point that is equivalent or nearly so with the minor points falling between.
 - The interrogative form. Here you present material asking your audience to react. Here you use dramatic or hyperbolic statements and examples and organize your points to create the most contrastive tension possible. (ie showing an image of a gunnery crew trading high fives followed by an image of death misery and desolation in the shelled area). You may instruct your audience to react to the presentation as a piece or to each point separately.
 - The interpretive form. Here you create a presentation that stands in metaphorical relation to the point(s) you are trying to convey. Such presentations can take the form of dance, poetry, plastic art, etc.
- Remember that your presentation must entertain your audience as well as informing them. This is one big difference between a presentation and a paper.
- When you are presenting in front of an audience, you are performing as an actor is on stage. How you are being perceived is very important. In answer to the question about "dressing up" for your presentation, this is not required. That does not mean that dress is irrelevant. Dress appropriately for the occasion. Present the desired image to your audience. Look pleasant, enthusiastic, confident, proud, but not arrogant. Remain calm. Appear relaxed, even if you feel nervous. Speak slowly, enunciate clearly, and show appropriate emotion and feeling relating to your topic. Establish rapport with your audience. Speak to the person farthest away from you to ensure your voice is loud enough to project to the back of the room. Vary the tone of your voice and dramatize if necessary.
- NEVER APOLOGIZE FOR ANY ASPECT OF YOUR PRESENTATION. IF YOU ARE AWARE OF WEAKNESSES IN YOUR ARGUMENT OR GAPS IN YOUR INFORMATION, **DISGUISE THEM AS BEST YOU CAN.**
- Body language is important. Standing, walking or moving about with appropriate hand gesture or facial expression is preferred to sitting down or standing still with head down and reading from a prepared speech.
- Use media or props for enhancement if appropriate and necessary.
 - Master the use of presentation software such as PowerPoint well before your presentation.
 - Do not over-dazzle your audience with technological bells and whistles.
 - Do not read slide or posters to your audience. Let them read and add ancillary material.
- Do not read from notes for any extended length of time although it is quite acceptable to glance at your notes. Speak loudly and clearly. Sound confident. Do not mumble. If you made an error, correct it, and continue.
- Maintain sincere eye contact with your audience. Use the 3-second method, e.g. look straight into the eyes of a person in the audience for 3 seconds at a time. Have direct eye contact with a number of people in the audience, and every now and then glance at the whole audience while speaking. Use your eye contact to make everyone in your audience feel involved.
- When using audio-visual aids to enhance your presentation, be sure all necessary equipment is set up and in good working order prior to the presentation. If possible, have an emergency backup system readily available.
- Have handouts ready and give them out at the appropriate time.
- Terminate your presentation with an interesting remark or an appropriate punch line. Leave your listeners with a positive impression and a sense of completion.