

Presentation Skills: More Than Just PowerPoint®

Chapter 1: Building Your Presentation

Building your presentation

You've been assigned to give a presentation in class. Now what?

Before you even start thinking of getting in front of the class, you need to think about what information you will want to present.

How do I get started?

Start working on your presentation by thinking about your goals. You might even start by thinking about your conclusion. What are the most important points you want to leave with your audience.

Consider your audience. What is important to them? What do you want them to think or do after seeing your presentation? You'll need to use words your audience will understand and make sure that the concepts are well-explained.

Research your topic thoroughly. No one likes to watch a presentation full of things they may already think they know. Use stories and examples and cite references to give your presentation depth and make it interesting.

Chapter 2: Creating Your Presentation

Using software to make your presentation

Your instructor may recommend that you use a software program to make your presentation. There are many Web sites and books that can help you learn the basics of the software.

However, you will still need to focus on how to use the program EFFECTIVELY. It's not just a matter of typing the information into the computer—there's a lot more to it!

What should I put on the slides?

Whatever you do, don't try to include all of your information on your presentation slides. If you put everything on the screen, your audience may stop listening to you and just read the slides.

Use short meaningful headlines on each slide. In your presentation, you can expand on the information on the screen and give it a personal touch. This will make the presentation more interesting for everyone involved.

Hot Tip: Make it BIG! Think about how it will look to someone in the last row. If you can, try your slides out in your classroom beforehand.

Can I put anything I want on the slides?

You have a lot of freedom on what you can choose to include on your slides, but you should be sure that all of it logically relates back to your point and topic.

Make sure you and your slides are “working together.” If you are talking about one thing and your slides say something else, you will confuse your audience and undermine your hard work.

Pop Quiz!

First, take a look at the following PowerPoint slide:

Ending the US Civil War – Political and social factors

- Abolitionist/Anti-slavery movement
- Economic situation
- Impact on population

Theses are the words of the speaker as he presented the slide:

All right, now that we've talked about some of the things that began the civil war, let's take a look at some of the things that ended it. These things are very important and will probably be on the test. But while we're talking about the civil war, I wanted to tell you about something that interests me. I found it on the web. It has to do with something they used for soldiers when they were sick. It was a tea made out of roasted apples that they poured boiling water over. Now I

tested this at home with my apples. I have an apple tree and I didn't use the apples that were on the ground. The rotten ones. I picked some that were pretty ripe and then, uh, this tree is actually several varieties of apples. It's one of those where you graft the different, the red and the green, so I tried the green apples and it was kind of tart, but it made a good tea and then I tried the red apples. It was a little sweeter, but I found that the closer to rotten, the more sour those red apples were, the better the tea became.

Based on the previous information, what *should* the presenter have been talking about?

- a. The Civil War
- b. Apples
- c. End of the Civil War

c is the correct answer.

Chapter 3: Visual Aids

Should I include charts and graphs?

As you put together your information, you may find that you want to include a complicated chart or detailed data that supports one of your points.

Check to see if your audience will be able to read the chart or information on the screen from their seats. Consider these questions:

- Is it too small?
 - Will they want to keep the data for later?
 - Will they be tempted to try to copy all of the information down too quickly?
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Should I pass out handouts?

You may want to pass around a handout with some additional information and insights that you don't cover in your presentation. This can be a great opportunity for you to make a lasting impression on your audience because they will have something to take with them.

Be sure to think about when during the presentation you want to distribute the handouts so that the audience isn't distracted.

Using images

Select images or photographs which will help your audience understand your topic. They should reflect your topic and relate to your audience.

This is your chance to be creative. Just make sure that they aren't too distracting—you want the focus to be on the topic, not just the pictures!

Hot Tip: Remember to make sure the audience sees your images clearly. Oh, and don't just stand in front of them!

Don't be taken in by bells and whistles!

Many software applications give you the ability to incorporate fancy transitions, flashing graphics and bells and whistles (literally) into your presentation.

Just because those options are there does not mean you have to use them. Use them sparingly so that they create an effect and don't distract your audience.

Your audience should remember the point of your presentation, not the fancy effects.

Chapter 4: Do a Final Check

Check your equipment

If you will be using any type of visual aid, projector or other technical equipment, be sure to practice with the equipment and maybe even have someone help out in case you need to trouble shoot it.

Presentation skills

We all know that it's not just what you say, but *how* you say it that has an impact on the audience. When you give a presentation, you'll need to pay attention to:

- Your voice
- Your physical presence
- Your visual aids

By focusing on each of these you can give a first-rate presentation!

Chapter 5: Presenting Your Presentation

Presentation Skills

We all know that it's not just what you say, but how you say it that has an impact on the audience. When you give a presentation, you'll need to pay attention to:

- Your voice
- Your physical presence
- Your visual aids

By focusing on each of these you can give a first-rate presentation!

Chapter 6: Using Your Voice

Before we begin, here are some definitions:

Inflection—a change in the tone of someone's voice

Monotone—sounds spoken in a single tone of voice

Diction—the degree of clarity and distinctness of pronunciation in speech

Enunciate—to pronounce or articulate

How should I use my voice?

You can use your voice to make your presentation flow, hold the audience's attention, emphasize points, and help the audience understand the information.

Inflection: When you get excited, your voice tone automatically rises and your volume goes up! Your tone can give clues about how you feel about your topic. The audience will become more interested if you sound interested. You can show enthusiasm, excitement, or passion about your subject by raising or lowering your tone of voice.

A **monotone** voice is one that doesn't change tone at all. Without any variation or expression, a monotone voice can quickly become difficult to listen to.

What are the elements of voice?

Volume: Speak loudly so that everyone in the room can hear you. Instead of straining your voice, breathe deeply and practice until you get used to hearing yourself a little louder than usual. It gets easier with practice.

Diction: Speak clearly so that everyone will be able to understand every word. Speak naturally, but **enunciate** every syllable. Don't let your voice drop in volume at the end of words and sentences.

Hot Tip: Get to know your strengths and weaknesses. Record yourself reading a page from a book or your presentation. Have friends or relatives listen and let you know if they understand every word.

Speed: Don't try to go too fast. Take your time, be comfortable and breathe! You will want to practice your presentation several times to make sure that it fits into your time limit without making you rush.

Pauses: Use pauses to breathe and let the audience keep up with your information. Remember, they are hearing this information for the first time and need to think about it while they listen.

Chapter 7: Your Physical Presence/Body Language

So do I just stand there?

Stand confidently in front of your audience and try not to move around too much. Plan out any movement you will do before you give your speech. Will there be a podium or lectern? Will you move around as you talk?

If you do plan to move, do it for a purpose. For example, you may need to move so that your audience can see the screen, or you may want to pass out handouts.

Be careful! If you don't make a plan to move, you may begin to pace—to move back and forth across the same part of the floor over and over again. You'll know you are pacing when you wear a track in the carpet.

Do I have to look at the audience?

Yes.

While you present your topic, take the time to look people in the eyes. When you do, members of your audience will feel connected to you, pay more attention and trust in what you are saying.

Avoid looking at one person only, or at one spot on the wall.

Hot Tip: If you can, learn your presentation so well that you don't need your notes and can concentrate on your audience instead of your notes.

What about gestures?

Gestures are movements you make during your speech. They can add or take away from your point, depending on how you use them.

Using gestures can feel a little like acting. You can clap your hands for attention, wave your arms over your head (“hey, over here!”) or put your hands out in front of you like you are pleading for your life (it may feel like you are...).

Start by paying attention to the gestures of the people around you when they speak. Do they use their hands? Do you see any gestures that would help you express the ideas in your presentation?

Become aware of the gestures you make naturally. Have someone watch you while you practice your presentation. You may be doing things you don’t even notice. If gestures have no real meaning or are over done, they can distract you audience.

Hot Tip: Practice your presentation in front of a mirror or get a second opinion by asking others to observe you and give you feedback.

Chapter 8: Nervousness

How can I keep from getting nervous?

First of all keep in mind that even experienced speakers get nervous.

However, there are a few techniques you can use to fight nervousness. BEFORE your presentation you should:

- **Practice, practice, practice!** -- The better you know your material, the more clear-headed you will be when it comes time to present it. Practice with notes, then without notes, then in front of a mirror, then in front of a friend. Time yourself and make sure you meet your time without going over. Each time you practice you’ll get a little more comfortable.
 - **Check to make sure you are meeting the assignment and following guidelines your teacher gave you.** Ask any questions you have about the presentation in advance. You will feel more relaxed if you know you have done everything you can to make sure your presentation will be a success.
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How do I avoid filler words?

In casual conversation we use words every day that fill space and help us through sentences. In a formal presentation, though, these words just don't fit in...

Ummm...er...

You know....

I was all.....

...whatever.....

When you are practicing, have someone help you count the times that you say um or ah. The only way to stop using filler words is to become aware of them and practice taking them out.

I'm nervous! Now what do I do?

DURING your presentation you should:

- **Slow down and take a deep breath.** It's easy to forget to breath when you are concerned about all of the other complicated things you have to think about. A deep breath can clear your mind, slow your heart rate and keep nervousness at a minimum.
 - **Keep some water close by.** Nervousness can sometimes give you a dry mouth, which can then make you more nervous...fight the cycle and take a sip of water!
 - **Picture it going well.** Just before you begin sometimes it is a good idea to remember all of the work you have put into the presentation so far, the practicing you have done and the things you have learned. Visualize it going well and congratulate yourself on your hard work. Now get up and show them that you know your stuff!
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Chapter 9: Test Your Knowledge

You're almost there!

Now that you've got the basics down, it's time to test your knowledge.

If your teacher has asked that you answer the final questions for course credit, you may need to go to the Assessment Section of your course in Blackboard. Go there now to check if there is a quiz waiting for you there.

If not, take a few minutes to answer the questions at the end of this tutorial and see how you do. Your instructor may require proof that you have completed the tutorial. If so, print the Certificate of Completion which can be found at the end of the Test Your Knowledge section. Print it, fill it out and turn it in to your instructor.

Don't forget, you can always go back and review any individual chapters by clicking the Chapters buttons at the top of your screen.

Pop Quiz!

1. When you use software to make your presentation, it doesn't matter how much text you put on the slides.

- a. True
- b. False

False is the correct answer. If you put all of your information on your slides, it can make your slides overcrowded and difficult to read.

2. When you start working on your presentation, you should think about

- a. what information you want to present
- b. what you want your audience to remember
- c. how you might conclude the presentation
- d. all of the above

d is the correct answer.

3. Including graphs and charts on your slides will just confuse your audience.

- a. True
- b. False

False is the correct answer. Including a graph or a chart will help you support your points and provide a visual aid for your audience.

4. When you give a presentation, you will need to pay attention to

- a. your teacher
- b. your voice
- c. your friends
- d. all of the above

b is the correct answer. By focusing on your voice, you can help avoid a monotonous presentation, which can be very difficult to listen to and understand. If you pay attention to your teacher and your friends, it will not only feel rude to the rest of your audience because you are just focusing on one individual, but it may also distract you from your presentation.

5. The elements of voice are:

- a. Volume
- b. Diction
- c. Speed
- d. All of the above

d is the correct answer. Paying attention to your voice during your presentation can help you hold the audience's attention and engage them in what you are saying.

6. Moving around too much while you are making a presentation can distract the audience.

- a. True
- b. False

True is the correct answer. Moving around too much or pacing while you are making a presentation can distract your audience and make it difficult for them to focus on you and what you are presenting.

7. Using gestures can help add to the effectiveness of your presentation.

- a. True
- b. False

True is the correct answer. Gestures can help you attract your audience's attention or emphasize a point. Too many gestures can cause problems, because they can distract your audience. Add them like seasoning—a sprinkle here and there.

8. Some techniques to fight nervousness include:

- a. Practicing
- b. Making sure you are meeting the assignment
- c. All of the above
- d. None of the above

c is the correct answer. The more you practice, the better you will get at your presentation. Also, make sure that you are following your teacher's instructions and directions, because knowing that you have done everything can help you relax.

9. Some of the filler words that you should avoid in your presentation are:

- a. “You know...”
- b. “I was all...”
- c. a & b
- d. neither a nor b

c is the correct answer. Filler words are words and phrases that we use in everyday conversation, but they are not appropriate for presentations.

10. If the software application you are using for your presentation allows you to incorporate animated graphics or images into your presentation, you should include as many as possible to make your presentation more interesting.

- a. True
- b. False

False is the correct answer. Although it is a good idea to include some images or graphics into your presentation, you should use them sparingly to avoid distracting your audience.

EXTRA's

Cool online references for students.

Toastmasters International is a group dedicated to improving people's public speaking skills. Check out their top 10 tips!

<http://www.toastmasters.org/pdfs/top10.pdf>

John Hebestreet's speech class materials

http://www.keithschool.com/us/gustafson/Judy_Gustafson/Public%20Speaking.htm

Some links to PowerPoint tutorials to help you get the basics down:

http://www.internet4classrooms.com/on-line_powerpoint.htm

http://www.iupui.edu/~webtrain/tutorials/powerpoint2000_basics.html

<http://www.rdpslides.com/pptfaq/> - This PowerPoint FAQ page has numerous links.

Cal Poly Tips and a good self-evaluation as well:

<http://www.polyu.edu.hk/learn-to-learn/student/html/GroupProject/presentation.htm>

Certificate of Completion

Your teacher may have asked you to provide some proof of completion in the form of a certificate. If so, print the Certificate of Completion for this tutorial on the following page and fill in the required information for your instructor before handing it in.

Certificate of Completion

Presentation Skills: *More Than Just PowerPoint*

Please print this document, neatly fill in the requested information and do the self-evaluation. Sign it and submit it to your instructor.

Student Name: _____
Last First

Course Number: _____ Section: _____ Course Title: _____

Semester: _____ Year: _____ Instructor Name: _____

By signing below, I certify that I have completed this tutorial as requested by the instructor.

Signature

Date



Self Evaluation

What is (are) the most important thing(s) that you learned from the tutorial?

Is there anything about presentational skills that you are still unclear about? Please be specific.

What other questions do you still have about presentation skills?