

Writing and Tutorial Center

How to Give a Strong Presentation

"There are two types of speakers in the world; the nervous and the liars."

"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear, not absence of fear."

—Mark Twain

PREPARATION

Research: Find facts, examples and stories that support your thesis.

Show, don't tell. Case studies, examples, and anecdotes that demonstrate your main idea(s) will be more impactful than a dry explanation.

Stay on point. Make connections and ask relevant questions.

Visual Elements: Slides should be clear and visually exciting.

Don't overwhelm with too many slides—5 stunning slides is better than 30 mediocre ones.

DON'T USE TOO MANY WORDS ON SLIDES! Only use text when it is **absolutely necessary**. You want the audience to focus mostly on what you are saying, not just reading words on a screen.

Use Bullet Points: Highlight main ideas/key points.

Leave out function words (prepositions, helping verbs, etc.)

← ↑ → + & = are frequently used symbols.

Abbreviations can also be helpful.

Have a small number of words = easy-to-digest bits of information.

No paragraphs or even full sentences, unless it's a quote.

Helps focus the audience's attention.

Use Notecards: Almost the same as bullet points.

Primary difference is, bullet points = audience, note cards = you.

Remember, a presenter is speaking, not reading!

Most effective notecards:

Contain only one main idea.

Are easy to read (big text, lots of space).

Are written on **ONE** side of the card only.

Are numbered (to keep the cards in order).

Write out information that needs to be exact (e.g. statistics, quotations, pronunciation of difficult words). Otherwise, use keywords and abbreviations.

Organization and Time Management: Give your presentation an organized flow that fits into the time constraint(s).

Be sure to practice with a timer!

Practice. Practice. Practice: Also, remain flexible.

Practicing does not make perfect, but it builds confidence and enables you to roll with the unexpected.

"Talent is cheaper than table salt."

What separates the talented individual from the successful one is a lot of hard work."

—Stephen King

DELIVERY

Delivery is how you connect with your audience. It includes techniques such as body language and pauses, which emphasize meanings and concepts.

Stand Tall: Shoulders back, chin up, weight balanced, arms relaxed. This shows confidence and aids breathing.

Eye Contact: Shift eyes using a “W”-shape formation around the room.

Enthusiasm: Beats nervousness—an audience tends to mirror you (you can research “mirror neurons” for more on this).

Humor: Consider taking a light-hearted approach.

Storytelling: It's an art form. Don't hesitate to tell a story—just cut out the boring parts!

Slow Down: Don't forget to breathe! Allow yourself and the audience time to process the information.

“The right word may be effective, but no word was ever as effective as a rightly timed pause.”
—Mark Twain

THE BEGINNING

Consider using a hook to draw in your audience. This can be:

- A personal story
- A powerful visual + silence
- A statistic or fact
- Humor that feels natural
- A question
- A quote
- A provocative statement
- Storytelling

THE ENDING

Wrap it up with a clear ending. A pause and a genuine “thank you for listening” is simple and polite. Make sure to add the sources cited for all research materials on your final slide.