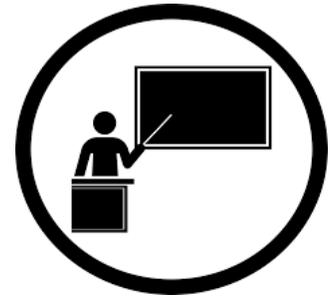


Oral Presentations

Preparation: Carefully choose the information that you will include in your presentation. Detailed content is often less critical in a verbal medium than in a written one. Create an outline and highlight your main points. After each main point, construct a natural transition to the next step. Note instances where visual aids will be useful. As a general rule, use one visual aid every two minutes – keep them simple, visible, and attractive. Be sure to keep timing in mind!



Organization: The Martini Glass Method

1. Tell ‘em what you’re gonna say: Start broad, then narrow your field of interest until you get to your olive (thesis statement, purpose, etc.). Identify it and explain how you will develop it in your presentation.
2. Then say it: Proceed through the body of your talk point by point, organizing facts as they are relevant to your points. Do not repeat facts.
3. Then tell ‘em what you said: Summarize your points, then broaden field of interest and conclude with more general statements. Refer back to thesis. Don’t use phrases like “in summary.”

Delivery: Don’t read or memorize your presentation. Have a brief outline of notes which will keep you on track. The most important rule of delivery is PRACTICE! When you practice, you should time yourself, use your visual aids, and ask a friend to watch and give you feedback. You can also schedule an oral presentation consultation at the Writing Resources Center.

Fear: The most effective cure for stage fright is the recognition that EVERYONE has it. In fact, nervousness can promote the adrenaline flow which is often necessary for delivery of a dynamic and captivating presentation. View your nervousness as a challenge and be rational – you are all doing this to learn, not to impress one another. Here are some guidelines to avoid a mental meltdown:

- Prepare thoroughly – Sound simple? Yes. Does it work? Yes.
- Breathe – Before you begin, breathe deeply.
- Interact with your audience – Don’t just speak to your audience, communicate with them. Eye contact is vital.
- Channel nervous energy – Focus any physical nervousness into smooth, controlled movements and voice modulations.
- Communicate confidence – Show your audience you’re in control.
- Don’t memorize your speech – It can be disastrous!

Grading: The following criteria may be used in evaluating your oral presentation.

- Content: accuracy / appropriateness / handouts or visual aids
- Structure: introduction / statement of thesis / points and transitions / conclusion
- Delivery: vocal style / physical presence / length

