

Preparing Presentations

Identify the main purpose

- Information giving/instruction
- Persuasion
- Ceremony/ritual
- Entertainment

Planning checklist

1 Room

- How large is the room?
- How is the room organised?
- Do you need to move the furniture?
- What equipment is needed?
- Have you checked the lights, video, and other equipment?
- Can you operate them confidently?

2 Audience

- How large is the audience?
- What age groups are in the audience?
- What is their educational background?
- What are the interests of the group?
- What are the expectations of the presentation?

Planning the content

1 Analyse the questions/choose the topic. Think about:

- Length of the presentation
- Purpose(s) of the presentation
- Room where it will take place
- Expectations of the audience
- Marking guide

2 Brainstorm/draft a rough outline. Think about:

- Important points you wish to make
- Where to find supporting evidence
- Examples that appeal to the audience
- Strategies to involve the audience

3 Research the information

- Begin with the prescribed texts then use key words from the topic to search library databases and catalogues for additional resources.
- As you read, take notes and add to, or adjust your rough outline.

You may decide to open your presentation with a short anecdote, a reference to a current news item, role play, or cartoon OHT “to grab” the audience’s attention. This can be effective and relax both the speaker and audience.

Structuring the Content

Presentations are structured with Introduction, Body, and Conclusion.

Introduction

- State the topic
- Define any ambiguous terms
- Outline the scope of the presentation
- Give a plan of the main points to be addressed
- (These could be included on a PowerPoint slide or an OHT.)

For further information:

- Contact the Academic Skills Adviser on your campus
- Visit our web pages on myACU.

Print the Pamphlet Series

Last revision:
December 2006

Body of presentation

- 1 Expand main points in a logical sequence
 - Compare/contrast, cause/effect, chronological, problem/solution, priority
- 2 Provide supporting evidence from your research with references and use examples that interest the audience
- 3 Use audio/visual aids
 - PowerPoint slides, OHT's
 - Handouts allow the audience to listen rather than take notes
 - Video segment (if short and relevant)
- 4 Ask rhetorical questions
- 5 Involve the audience through questioning and short activities (if required)

Conclusion

- 1 Summarise the main points – You may reuse the PowerPoint slide or OHT from the introduction
- 2 Draw any implications
- 3 Evaluate the importance of the information
- 4 Come to a conclusion.

Preparing visual aids

- For the speaker, visual aids act as a “trigger’ for memory and keep the presentation focused. For the audience, they add interest and provide an additional way of receiving the message. When preparing visual aids use point form rather than long sentences so that the audience will listen instead of reading
- Use clear and visible Power Point slide templates with appropriate colour contrasts
- Use clear and visible OHT's, using double spacing, larger fonts, bold and large margins.

Final preparation

- Practise in front of a friend (ask for feedback), with a cassette recorder/video, in the room for the presentation, if possible
- Time the complete presentation to ensure it is within the time allowed
- Organise your notes, PowerPoint slides/OHT's in the order the information will be presented
- Number the pages
- Visualise the completed presentation, mentally going through each step
- Visualise the audience's positive reaction to your knowledge, preparation, and enthusiasm.

Giving the presentation

- Project the voice to the back rows
- Use pauses to show confidence and authority. They give you a chance to organise your thoughts and your audience time to make sense of the information
- Vary the tone to reduce monotony
- Make eye contact with different people in the audience
- Avoid folded arms or hands on hips
- Dress with business-like appearance: clothes can impart confidence
- Smile to relax the audience and create a pleasant atmosphere.

Remember confidence comes from knowing that you are well prepared and understand your content.