



Presentations and Speaking Skills

INITIAL PLANNING

- Carefully consider the purpose, the prof's expectations, your audience, any time limits, and the evaluation criteria.
- For a group presentation, it is good to have a group leader and to clearly establish who is responsible for which aspects of the research and the presentation. Schedule time for at least one group rehearsal prior to the presentation.

RESEARCHING THE TOPIC

- Be sure to narrow the focus appropriately.

ORGANIZING THE TALK

- Intro – get your audience's attention; state your purpose; give a road map; communicate your key messages
- Body – arrange your points in the most logical order; prepare pauses and smooth transitions; organize any examples and data; use appropriate visual aids to support your topic
- Conclusion – summarize main points; refer to your stated purpose; acknowledge reference sources; invite questions

PROBLEMS TO WATCH OUT FOR!

- Too many full sentences on slides.
- Spelling errors or inconsistent fonts used in your slides.
- Too many points in bulleted lists.
- Overly complicated charts or too many pictures.
- Useful website: www.slideshare.net (this site contains examples of effective slides).

VISUAL AIDS

- If using audio-visual aids, have a back-up plan, such as on overhead or handouts.
- With handouts, think carefully about what to include and when to distribute them.

DELIVERY

- For a group presentation, think about where to stand or sit.
- Decide how dependent you will be on notes.
- Clarify any pronunciation ahead of time.
- Your voice, posture, gestures, and eye contact are important.
- Decide if you will take questions during or at the end of your presentation. Anticipate possible questions.

REHEARSE!

- To ensure it goes smoothly, practice your presentation three times.
- Get adequate rest the night before.
- Dress appropriately.
- Arrive early to set up equipment and calm any nervousness.
- Taking a few deep breaths should calm you down.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- SpeakEasy, a program offered by Counseling Services
- Toastmasters – www.toastmasters.org -- Dal has a branch.

