



## WORKSHEET FOR DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE PRESENTATIONS

A final presentation has become a regular feature of most academic programs as it offers another modality for a student to present their learning. A “public talk” is a great way to stimulate awareness about a topic as well as receive validation of the researching effort. This is a fundamental reason that the formal “defense” or presentation concludes one’s thesis or dissertation. While these are the “capstone” of your academic program and there’s an inherent evaluation involved, it might be best to think of your audience as curious and eager to learn from you. In this regard, questions should be regarded as a positive reflection of an engaged audience. In fact, you want to stimulate questions from your audience (more on questions later). Now, more than ever, public presentations are facilitated through Zoom meetings and/or videotaped, so this resource will blend both f2f and video presentations.

Not all of us are stars in front of the camera, but we can do things to garner success. Your audience will forgive you for looking at your notes, periodic shaky voice and hands, but will lose attention if it’s clear you haven’t prepared. So, before we do anything, we want to impress the value of preparing through engaging in the writing process, from brainstorming to revising.

### **Brainstorming Warm Up:**

Let’s begin with reflecting back to the “best” presentation you’ve been to. What do you recall from it? How did the speaker keep your



attention? What impressed you about the presentation? Write down at least three things:

What I like in a presentation:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

From the above list, brainstorm a couple features that can you integrate into your presentation. List these:

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**Compose:**

*Organize the presentation with intro, body, and conclusion*

1. Begin by thanking the audience and if this is an oral defense of thesis/dissertation presentation, acknowledge the faculty members who supported your inquiry.
2. Include a “lead” to grab the audience’s interest. You might have an anecdote about how you became interested in the topic. A compelling quote or image might contribute an overall feeling as you enter the presentation. It might be something that’s not part of the paper, but might become something that your audience remembers about you.



3. The “body” is the bulk of the presentation. Here, describe/explain your topic and its context then move into your purpose and share your research.
  - i. Consider not being just a “talking head” and having visuals – even a simple slide with quotes, data, etc. helps create a balance with your talking.
  - ii. Less is More: Identify a few compelling details and present them. Don’t saturate your audience with detail as it will work against your intent. Too much information dulls the senses. In fact, some would argue that finding that balance helps audience members think of questions. And because you prepared, you’d have the answers.
  - iii. Use slides to enrich or supplement your talk. Take time to make these visually appealing.
4. The conclusion is as important as the intro. Take your time here and also time yourself so that you’re not shortchanged of this important component. You might return to whatever device from the introduction, but sometimes it’s effective to end with something meaningful (a quote, a finding, etc.) that reinforces the significance of the research.
5. Thank your audience for attending; ask for questions.

*Be strategic: consider the three points you want your audience to take away and emphasize them.*

*Use concrete language & varied syntax (including questions), which will help your voice modulate rather than a stoic reading.*



## The Presentation:

1. Be prepared & organized
2. Stick to the Time: there's a time limit for a reason. Most contemporary viewers become distracted as early as 10 minutes. That's why most Ted Talks don't exceed 18 minutes.
3. Include visuals & practice sharing your screen.

## Engaging with Your Audience:

<b>Do</b>	<b>Video/Zoom meeting</b>	<b>Don't</b>
Have eye contact	Know where your camera is and look into it.	Avoid the camera
Speak clearly	Practice with the microphone	Drink/Chew gum
Refer to notes	Have your notes directly in front of you	Head down reading
Write out your script	Have the script in front of you	Read it verbatim
Clear slides	Clear slides	Overload information
Thank the audience	Speak directly to camera and thank audience	Mumble "the end"

## Finalize the Presentation:

1. Set the stage for success: quiet location, if f2f bring something to personalize the room (flowers?), have clean setting for online.
2. Check the ambience, move chairs in whatever formation you'd like. Be sure screen works and that you know how to use the remote. Ensure quiet environment for video
3. If you're recording, take a look at your background, lighting, sound etc.

- a. Zoom allows personalized backgrounds, but avoid using something that would be distracting. Also, your movement with these backgrounds results in blurred image.
  - b. Check for the best light so you're not in a dark shadow
4. Take time to edit the recording

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