

Making the Most of Oral Presentations

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Overview

1. Characteristics of a Good Oral Presentation
2. Preparation Strategies
3. Creating Focused Presentations
4. Using Presentation Software
5. Managing Nerves
6. Handling Audience Questions

Good Oral Presentations

- Strong organization
- Clear focus
- Appropriate visual aids
- Audience awareness
- Good presentation style

Preparation Strategies

Before you start: **Research**

While you are working: **Revision**

Before you are ready to present: **Practice**

Research

- Goals of the talk
 - What are the expectations of your host?
 - Who is your potential audience?
- Physical space
- Technical equipment
- Allotted time

Revision

Slides:

- Make sure you end up with slides that are
 - Effective in use of words and images
 - Free of errors

Presentation Notes:

- Create the presentation notes you need by refining them as you go along

Practice

- Practice your delivery
- Time yourself
- Evaluate your own performance
- Practice again

Creating Focused Presentations

- Identify the focal point
- Devise a strong introduction and overview
- Be disciplined about the content
- Control the flow of information
- Commit to the organization

Working Backwards

1. Establish the main idea
2. Identify the key support
3. Identify other supporting material
4. Construct the common ground
5. Decide on the organization
6. Write the presentation
7. Create the necessary visual aids

Using Presentation Software

- Slide basics
- Verbal vs. graphical visual aids
- Assessing your own slides
- Best use of presentation software

Slide Basics: Font

- Use sans serif fonts (not serif fonts)
- *Avoid italics*; use **bold** for emphasis
- Underlining cuts off the bottom of letters
- ALL CAPITALS ARE HARDER TO READ

Slide Basics: Size

Use large fonts

12 point

24 point

28 point

32 point

48 point

60 point

Slide Basics: Colour

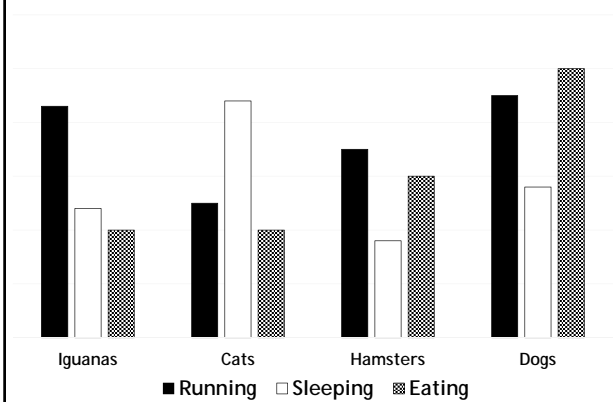
- Light text against a dark backdrop works best
- Avoid excessive use of colour
- Aim for contrast rather than variety

Slide Basics

Reveal information in stages:

- Reveal and discuss bullet points one by one
- Reveal and discuss each element of a graphic separately

Common Pet Activities



Slide Basics: Simplicity

Watch your use of the following:

- Animation
- Clip art
- Background designs

Last step:

- Assess the legibility of slides by looking at your screen from a distance of 2 metres

AGENDA

Goals

Objectives

Strategies

Conclusions

Future projects

FINAL THOUGHTS

Quarter	East	West	North
1st Qtr	20	30	40
2nd Qtr	25	35	45
3rd Qtr	30	40	50
4th Qtr	20	30	40

Verbal vs. Graphical

- **Verbal visual aids:** Leading the audience through your presentation
- **Graphical visual aids:** Showing that which is difficult to convey in words

Assessing Your Own Slides

- What is the purpose of this slide?
- Are the diagrams clearly labelled?
- Are there too many words on the slide?
- Have you used simple animation effectively?
- Is the slide cluttered or confusing?
- Does the slide contain information that is not explained in your presentation?

Best Use of Presentation Software

- Create your presentation—both the **narrative** and the **graphics**—without using slideware
- Then use slideware to create a visually appealing presentation

Managing Nerves

Three key aspects of an oral presentation:

Content, Design, Delivery

- Have confidence in both the **content** and the **design** of the presentation
- Take every opportunity to practice your **delivery**

Tips for Managing Nerves

- Don't judge or discuss your own anxiety
- Aim for enthusiasm rather than relaxation
- Identify a strategy that makes you feel in control (try smiling)
- Dress comfortably
- Know your presentation space
- Don't let your mistakes or signs of inattention from the audience distract you
- Leave yourself time to practice

Handling Audience Questions

Key principle: Set the stage for a controlled question period by making a ***focused*** presentation

Preparing for Questions

- Prepare a focused talk with a clearly delimited central topic
- Poke holes in your own argument and identify potential audience questions
- Clarify why potential problems haven't undermined the value of your research
- Identify particular types of questions

Question Period Tips

- Take your time before answering
- Always repeat the question
- Engage with the whole audience
- Be honest about what you don't know
- Answer the question you were asked
- Be succinct

Final Thought

Treat an oral presentation as an opportunity

- *to improve your delivery*
- *to refine your content*
- *to engage with interested listeners*

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