

TOP TIPS FOR PRESENTATIONS

Your Audience

In **every field the style of presenting is different**. Keep in mind who you are presenting in front of when preparing.

- **Who** are they?
- **What level of understanding** do they have?
- What can I do to **make them interested**?
- **Why should they care**?

You should also refer to the marking scheme and guidelines if you are getting a grade for this.

Preparation

TOP TIP

Preparation is about 70 - 80% of all presentations.

The more comfortable with the topic you are, the more confident the presentation.

Muscle memory is important and the more you practice doing presentations, the more your body naturally does it. Practice in front of friends, family, mirror, or even recording yourself and watching it later.

TOP TIP

Presentations consist of more than just verbal communication. Opening your body posture expresses that you understand the topic and are confident in the presentation. An open posture invites the audience into your topic, whilst closing your posture makes the audience members not want to listen.

Preparation Checklist

- Am I **communicating effectively and efficiently**?
- Is **my topic specific** enough?
- Am I **on track for the presentation date**?
- Am I **following the guidelines** (if there are any)?
- **How long** does it need to be and am I within the **time limit**?
- Where is the **location** of the presentation?
 - **What services** will the room have (i.e. projector, computer, whiteboard, etc.)?
- **Who** is going to attend?
- What is the **purpose of the presentation**?

Story Telling

All presentations are **another way of describing how to tell a story**. You should **think outside of the box to make the presentation more engaging** while keeping the audience interested in what you are talking about. Essays are verbal communications about a topic, **presentations are a visual way to communicate a topic**. **Keep in mind the topic** you are trying to express while creating the slides so that your message is clearly understood to the audience.

TOP TIP

Similar to a story, there needs to be a beginning (introduction/ overview), main body (topic/ themes) and a conclusion (summary of your points), for each presentation.

Visual Aids

When creating slides, **make sure that they are legible**. You should ask yourself if your slides are:

- **Understandable?**
- **Distracting?**
- **Clearly visible?**
- **Do images help the audience follow your story?**

Using colour and clip art will help keep the audience engaged but **make sure that there is a relation between the images and your topic**. Don't just put images or sounds in the presentation without having a reason.

PowerPoint Tips

- A picture paints a thousand words. **Use images to help explain your topic.**
- Slides should present the main points as **short sentences and bullet points.**
- **List should be kept to a minimum.**
- **Hand-outs should be given at the beginning of the presentation** to avoid distractions and using up time.

Advice for the Day of the Presentation

To avoid being hydrated while speaking, **ensure you eat beforehand** and **have water with you**. **Dress in something that you feel both comfortable in but also confident**. You should also make **eye contact** with the audience. Make sure **the audience knows you appreciate their time**.

TOP TIP

If you get uncomfortable looking at people; look in the middle at a desk because the people in front of the desk think you are looking at someone behind, and the people behind the desk think you are looking at someone in front.

Try to remember to take it slow and speak clearly. When you talk fast people tend to stumble over words.

TOP TIP

If you think you are going to fast, take a sip of water to allow yourself to take a minute.

Make sure the audience is understanding the topic and **you can always ask if they need clarifications** on anything. Remember to make it fun! **If it is fun for you, the enthusiasm will show in your talk and the audience will be more engaging** when they know you are having a good time.

Managing Anxiety

Nerves are normal and 100% expected. They will show that you want to do well. Remember **the audience isn't there to make it hard**, they've all been there too. You can do the following to improve your anxiety:

TOP TIP

Record yourself when you practice, and you can find your nervous ticks and once you know - you can hide them. A common sign of anxiety is if you find that your hands are shaking. Put your notes on a podium or hard surface, so it is not visible to the audience.

A good **breathing exercise for calming your nerves is:**

- **Breathe in for 4**
- **Hold for 4**
- **Breathe out for 8 (empty out the lungs)**

TOP TIP

Breathing exercises allow your body to only concentrate on one thing - breathing! They calm your mind and slow your heart rate.

Useful Links

- Pixabay with copyright free images, Available at: <https://pixabay.com/images/search/copy/>
- How to present like a Pro, Available at: <https://www.slideshare.net/soappresentations/how-to-present-like-a-pro-part-i> <https://www.slideshare.net/soappresentations/how-to-present-like-a-pro-part-ii>
- Introduction to Storytelling, Available at: <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/hass-storytelling/storytelling-pixar-in-a-box/ah-piab-we-are-all-storytellers/v/storytelling-introb>
- Beginners Guide to Using PowerPoint, Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XF34-Wu6qWU>
- Tips for using PowerPoint, Available at: <https://www.thinkoutsidetheslide.com/ten-secrets-for-using-powerpoint-effectively/>

Other Relevant PDFs

- Reflective Writing
- Proofreading
- Editing