

Oral communication is a core skill that will be developed through your courses at the Business School. In order to prepare for presentations, we recommend a 3 stage process. First analyse your audience, then examine the purpose of the speech, and then flesh out the message you want to communicate.

Final Summary/Conclusion

Restate main points and focus on the main message for the audience. Outline the action required. End on a positive note.

Six Essential Steps for Preparing for an Oral Presentation

1. Determine the purpose
2. Analyse the audience and situation
3. Choose the ideas for your message
4. Organise the data and write on note cards
5. Plan visual aids if desirable
6. Rehearse your presentation

Differences between Written and Oral Presentations

Speaker and audience are visible

Written texts can be re-read, but oral texts must be grasped the first time

Written texts can deal with more complex points, as the readers are less distracted

Oral presentations are more direct and informal - use of 'I', 'we', 'you' and informal language

Rhetorical questions are common

Repetition, restatement, and reinforcement are common

Speaker uses intonation, stress, pause, emphasis and paralanguage

Content

The content of the presentation should show the speaker's thorough knowledge of the topic.

Particularly in a presentation based on research and sources that the audience may be unfamiliar with, the sources for the information should be clearly shown in any visuals and handouts or spoken clearly to the audience during the presentation to avoid *plagiarism*.

Each idea or point mentioned in the presentation should be supported with evidence, examples or explanation. It is important that the topics are well prepared and that not too much, or too little content, is attempted in the time given.

Notes	You should try to put your notes in point form and use them as reference points to remind you of the structure of your speech. They are not read out word for word as it is expected that you will talk naturally about a topic you have prepared and know about. Notes are on neat cards and their use is not to be too obvious to the audience.
Voice	Avoid a monotonous voice. Use pace, volume and stress important words to make the speech more interesting for the audience.
Time	Always speak to the time given. Rehearse the speech to identify whether timing is correct. Remember the average speech rate is about 120 – 200 words per minute so plan your speech content for the number of words that match the time length of the speech.
Language	Remember the audience must understand you. Consider language that is appropriate vocabulary for the topic and language that you are comfortable using and can pronounce. Also remember to use transitional phrases as they help the audience know what is happening and they make your speech sound 'immediate'. Remember, you are there talking to an audience full of living people not the back wall of a room or the carpet.
Attentiveness to audience	Remain attentive to what the audience is doing and respond to their indications of interest or confusion. If they seem inattentive consider rephrasing your information and talk directly to them using comments such as 'This next example is interesting because...' 'This next statistic surprises me because...' 'The slide shows the model I have been talking about in clear detail. You will notice that...' You may have to think as you are speaking of ways to explain or keep the audience's attention.

Team Presentations

Planning and rehearsing a team presentation is very important as the team can consider for example who would be the best person to introduce the presentation, how to organize a smooth delivery and whether timing is accurate. In a team presentation the first speaker may introduce themselves, state the main intention of the presentation, and then introduce the members of their team outlining briefly, and in order, what each speaker intends to speak about. The first speaker may then present their topic and then at the end invite the next speaker by name to come forward to speak. At the beginning of their part, each speaker may briefly explain again what they intend to speak about, and after finishing their part they will then invite the next speaker to present. This keeps the audience well-informed about what is happening and allows for a smooth transition from speaker to speaker.

Evaluation Checklists

Use this checklist both as a reminder before you present, and as an evaluation when you have finished.

<p>Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enthusiastic introduction clear introduction, body and conclusion strong conclusion clear points adequate, relevant support/evidence clear linking devices appropriate timing 	<p>Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> question adequately answered main areas of topic covered relevant material main points covered adequately appropriate and strong evidence <p>Visual Aids</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear, not too cluttered easy to read relevant appropriate 	<p>Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> clear voice and well-projected clear enunciation speech not too fast interest and enthusiasm pauses between points <p>Audience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> appropriate body language appropriate feedback audience involvement
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<p>Quality</p>		
<p>First impressions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaker appeared confident and purposeful before starting to speak Speaker attracted audience's attention from the outset 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Body of presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main points stated clearly Sufficient information and detail provided Appropriate and adequate use of examples/ anecdotes Discussion flowed logically 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conclusion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ending of presentation signalled adequately Main points summarised adequately/ ideas brought to fruition Final message clear and easy to remember 		
<p>Coping with questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole audience searched for questions Questions addressed in order Questions handled adeptly Full audience addressed with answers Speaker maintained control of discussion 		
<p>Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speech clear and audible to entire audience Talk given with engagement and enthusiasm Presentation addressed to all parts of the audience Eye contact with audience throughout presentation Speaker kept to time limit Good use of time without rushing at the end Pace neither too fast nor too slow 		
<p>Visual aids and handouts - if appropriate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual aids well prepared Visual aids clearly visible to entire audience Speaker familiar with own visual aids (e.g. OHT's, diagrams etc.) Effective use made of handouts and visual aids Handouts well-prepared and useful 		
<p>Assessor's comments: was this an effective presentation?</p>		

This example of an assessment schedule is a useful guide; however if possible check with your lecturer/tutor for any specific assessment criteria that they may have.