

How to Plan an Oral Presentation

The secret to a successful presentation is to think of your audience at every stage in its development. As you plan and practice, consider how you will captivate your audience with your content. Engage them by creating a logical structure for your presentation and stimulating their interest in learning more.

1. Plan for a successful presentation

Determine your presentation's focus

Fortunately, presentations don't last forever. Unfortunately, you only have so much time to deliver your messages.

When you create your presentation, think about the audience:

- What do they need to know?
- What's the purpose of your presentation?
- How much time do you have to keep them engaged?

Prioritize your information into three categories:

- 1. Need to Know**
- 2. Good to Know**
- 3. Nice to Know**

Include the "Need to Know" content in the presentation. The "Good to Know" and "Nice to Know" parts can be mentioned in follow-up discussions.

Create a script

Creating a script will help you plan out your presentation. Scriptwriting sets up your organization, flow, and voice.

Organize your content

Make an outline to determine the information hierarchy. The structure will affect the presentation's logic.

Guide the audience

Apply the Golden Rule for presentations: introduce, present, and re-iterate what you have to say. This helps the audience follow your presentation's flow.

Engage in conversation

Talk to the audience as you would talk normally. Feel free to use contractions and speak in the active voice.

Add visuals

A picture can be worth 1000 words, but not all words will add value to your presentation. Select visuals to back up your presentation. Whenever you include a meaningful image, like a graph, or a figure, explain it to the audience.

Beware of visual clutter as it can overwhelm the audience and distract them from your message.

Looking for presentation technology? PowerPoint and Google Slides are common choices.

If you want to add interactivity to your presentation, consider [Mentimeter](#). It's a Freemium, but you'll be able to survey and quiz your audience.

2. Practice makes improvements

Present to an audience

Get used to presenting in person and experience how you manage your time and content.

Test your technology

Troubleshoot your transitions and animations. Learn how to use your technology ahead of time.

Use key points

Don't read from your script. Speak freely and refer to key points to give you cues.

Get feedback

[Book an appointment](#) at the RGASC to get feedback on your presentation:
<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/appointments-undergraduate>

Engage in eye contact

Look at the audience to gauge their interest and attention.

Check your volume

Project your voice. Ensure that every audience member can hear you.

Pace yourself

There may be a time limit, but this doesn't mean you should speak too fast or too slow.

Time your presentation

Did you meet the time limit? Adjust your content and refine your presentation as needed.