

Top tips for presentations



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1. Know your purpose.

Begin by reviewing the assignment guidelines and rubric, an assessment tool that clearly indicates marking criteria. Consider what information is essential to include. In what way should the information be presented? Knowing the purpose of the presentation is key to understanding its scope and defining goals for your presentation.

2. Know your audience.

Consider your audience. Who is your presentation for? Which aspects of your topic will be the most important or interesting to your audience? What does your audience need to know? What questions will your audience have?

3. Know your topic.

Allow plenty of time to thoroughly research your topic. Focus on aspects of the topic that will be important or interesting to your audience. Ensure that your focus is consistent with the assignment requirements for the presentation. Use the rubric to guide the development of your presentation.

4. Know how to organize your presentation.

Organize your presentation as you would an oral essay. Start with an introduction to your topic with information about how your presentation is structured. Develop the main body of information with support and examples. Summarize your topic in a conclusion. You should also prepare for possible questions from your audience.

5. Practice your presentation.

Before you deliver your presentation you need to practice it until you don't have to read directly from your notes. Always add comments, examples or insights that are not on your slides.

6. Be punctual and mindful of your timing.

Arrive early and start and end on time.

7. Avoid including too much information on slides.

Use relevant photos or short video clips if appropriate.

8. Engage your audience.

Scan the room and make eye contact with all members of your audience to help them connect to you and your presentation. When possible, ask questions or take quick polls with a show of hands.

9. Use transitions.

Guide your audience through the different sections of your presentation so they can follow you more easily. For example, use phrases like 'I'd like to start with'; 'Let's move on to my next point'; 'To conclude'; etc.

10. Show confidence.

Use techniques to maximize your confidence, including maintaining eye contact with your audience; smiling periodically; speaking loudly, clearly and at a relaxed pace; and knowing your topic well.

If you need more help, make use of the available academic supports offered by DC including your professor and Student Academic Learning Services.