



### **Oral Presentations**

#### **Writing the Content of Your Presentation**

Make sure you answer the question set. What are the main objectives?

Identify the main points. Gather information for these points.

Estimate the amount of material you need for your allocated time. Allow time for questions.

Establish a good structure:

**Introduction:** introduce yourselves and outline what you are going to talk about. Explain that the audience will have an opportunity to ask questions at the end.

**Main points:** these should be clearly marked out and flow in logical order. This will make it easier for you to deliver the presentation and your audience to follow it. Avoid jargon – make sure you explain any technical terms that may not be familiar to the audience.

**Conclusion:** summarise the main points that you have covered and draw appropriate conclusions. Try to finish with a memorable statement or image.

**Questions:** ask the audience if they have any questions. Allow a couple of minutes for this.

Practise your delivery and timing. Discard less important points or reduce the level of detail if you have too much information for the time allocated. If you finish too soon, do further research for additional relevant material.

Repeat the last step! This is crucial. Never over-run your time allocation or run-out of material and finish early.

#### **Developing a Visual Style**

Most people choose to use PowerPoint, but it's not essential unless it's stated in your presentation brief. Some people may choose to use an alternative such as white board, video, flip-chart or other props! Whatever you use, make sure you are comfortable with it.

## **PowerPoint Tips**

Develop a memorable presentation – use images and colour, but don't over-do it! Avoid orange and yellow as these are difficult to read. White or yellow text on a blue background is easy to see.

Don't put too much on each slide - use bullet points and images. The audience want to hear you deliver your presentation not read it from a slide! You want them to be listening not reading!

Use images, photographs, graphs to illustrate and enhance your points. Images or words should be legible from the back of the room.

Print handouts if required in your presentation brief.

## **Prezi**

An alternative to PowerPoint is Prezi, a web-based presentation tool. You can create an account for free and write your presentation using the Prezi software.

Go to [www.prezi.com](http://www.prezi.com) to find out more.

## **Delivering the Presentation**

### **Things To Do Ahead of the Presentation:**

Be as organised and prepared as possible – this will boost your confidence.

Practise the presentation over and over so that you have it memorised – say it out loud!

Book a library group study room with presentation facilities to practise using a whiteboard.

Make sure you are familiar with the room and equipment.

Produce handouts if you have been asked to.

Group presentations: make sure each person knows their part and the order flows well.

### **Things To Do (And Not Do!) During The Presentation:**

#### **Nerves**

Accept that you may be a little bit nervous – everyone is, even experienced presenters!

#### **Appearance**

Formal or informal? Dress appropriately for your audience. This has an impact on the impression you make.

#### **Voice**

Try to speak at a natural speed – nerves will make you speed up. Take deep breaths and pauses. Speak clearly, but don't shout; try and judge the acoustics of the room.

### **Avoid monotone**

Engage with your audience by altering the pitch and tone of your voice. However, you should try and avoid this sounding contrived or unnatural.

### **Present don't read!**

One of the worst presentation offences is reading from sheets of notes! This removes engagement with the audience and is very boring to watch! Learn your presentation in the preparation stage so that the graphics and bullet points on the screen are all you need. If absolutely necessary take short notes in with you containing the main points to be covered.

### **Jokes**

Avoid them unless you are a natural comedian!

### **Body language**

Avoid nervous habits such as fiddling with things, buttons, hair etc.

### **Audience**

Look around at all sections of the audience and make eye contact, but don't fix on an individual! Some natural movement is desirable, but avoid pacing or swaying. Don't turn round to face the display screen and put your back to the audience. Stand to the side of the screen so that you don't block anyone's view.

### **Questions**

Be prepared if someone interrupts you to ask a question during your talk. View this positively – the audience are paying attention and participating!

### **Thanks and questions**

At the end of your presentation thank the audience for listening and ask if they have any questions. Make sure the whole audience is aware of any question asked, repeat it if necessary so everyone can hear it.

If you can't answer a question just admit it. You could always say you will try to research an answer and send it to the person later. If none has any questions, try asking the audience a question you have prepared – this shows confidence and preparation!

## **Group Presentations**

Coordinating the writing, practising and delivery of a presentation involving a group can be difficult. Have a look at this guide produced by The Learn Higher Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching - [Making group-work work](#). It follows a group of students through a project over ten episodes. It highlights the challenges of working as part of a student group.

## **Final point**

Practice makes perfect! Keep practising until you no longer need notes

Access LEAP Online at: [www.bolton.ac.uk/leaponline](http://www.bolton.ac.uk/leaponline)