



Oral presentations

What is an oral presentation?

An oral presentation is a talk given to a group where views on an assigned issue or topic are presented. They may have specific requirements which are usually detailed in your course outline and may be presented individually or as part of a group. You will need to:

- persuade your audience that your view is well supported by the ideas and information presented, and
- provide clear links between main points, explanations and examples.

Oral presentations, like written assignments, have three main parts. The introduction is the initial point of view developed in response to the topic (also called the thesis statement) and the body is the main argument with evidence presented to support this point of view. The conclusion is a summary of the arguments and the restatement of the overall point of view that has been developed. You may suggest future questions or research directions that could be taken in relation to the topic.

Preparing the speech

As with a written assignment, preparation for an oral presentation includes:

- analysing a topic closely;
- developing a point of view in relation to that topic through research and thought;
- considering the audience and their background knowledge to help choose content and resources;
- considering your presentation time to help decide how much information will be needed;
- collating all your information and ideas, and decide on what and how much content to include;
- considering how you can present your ideas in a logical order;
- deciding on the main points, then selecting appropriate explanations and examples, and
- deciding on appropriate language you will use as well as [linking words](#) (Improving your academic skills module *opens in a new window*) to show any connections between main points or ideas use key words several times to emphasise their importance.

Preparing the visual aids

You may be required to use visuals with your presentation. Remember that these are support only and should not be the main focus of the presentation. YOU are the main focus. Visuals such as PowerPoint can support your presentation by:

- providing an outline of the presentation (key terms, ideas)
- illustrating key points with images, diagrams, tables, charts or graphs



- allowing the audience to follow your presentation
- keeping you on task (and time)

Follow the link provided for more detailed tips on [creating good PowerPoint slides \(UNSW\)](#) (*opens in a new window*).

Group Presentations

Working with a group will involve a high level of co-operation between group members in order to effectively prepare and deliver a presentation so it is important to reach early agreement on goals, timeline, and approaches to collaboration.

Tips for group presentations

- Confirm that there is a shared understanding of the task.
- Meet regularly to consult on progress and confirm a common point of view.
- Practice as a group to ensure your presentation flows well via transitions between each speaker.

Practising

Practise, practise and practise again. This helps you overcome any nervousness and makes you more confident with the content and the delivery. You need to practice what you will say (content) as well as how you will say it (delivery).

Practising content

- Develop your first set of notes and be ready to adapt them.
- Use cue cards with bullet points and write key words, ideas and phrases rather than sentences.
- Practise out loud from your cue cards so you are able to talk about the information in various ways.
- Be sure to state clearly what the purpose of the presentation is in the introduction.
- Deliver the presentation and then summarise your main points.
- Do not try to get across too many main ideas (keep it focussed, but simple).

Practising delivery

- Time the presentation and modify it if needed. This will help you to avoid being rushed.
- Focus on standing up straight, using appropriate gestures and looking at your audience.
- Practise with an audience or in front of a mirror so you are aware of how you present yourself.
- Be sure to face your audience and engage them with eye contact.
- Practise projecting your voice so your audience can hear you easily.



- Use your voice by changing volume, and pitch to add emphasis to important points.
- Use pauses to show that you are moving on to a new point.
- Record your voice to hear how you sound.

Preparing for questions

- Anticipate any questions that could be asked and prepare possible responses.
- Be clear about your knowledge and what is outside the scope of your presentation.
- If you don't know the answer, be willing to say so.

On the day

- Arrive early to make sure that the room, equipment and lay-out suit your needs.
- Greet the audience and try to look confident and relaxed.
- Wait for the audience to focus their attention on you before you start.
- Hand out materials either before or after the presentation (to keep the audience's attention during your presentation).
- Prepare for your nerves on the day and decide on what you can do to [manage stress](#) (*opens in a new window*).

Useful links *(all open in a new window)*

Visit the links below for more information about:

- [Suggestions from students and staff for preparing a good presentation \(ACU\)](#)
- [Good and bad examples of an oral presentation \(University of Adelaide\)](#)
- [Advice on avoiding common mistakes \(UNSW\)](#)
- [Some tips to becoming a better presenter \(YouTube\)](#)
- [Tips for creating good PowerPoint presentations \(UNSW\)](#)

There may be resources that have been created with your lecturers, addressing assignment tasks and topics specific to your courses. Follow the links below to find out:

[Business](#)

[Education, Arts and
Social Sciences](#)

[Health Sciences](#)

[IT, Engineering and the
Environment](#)