

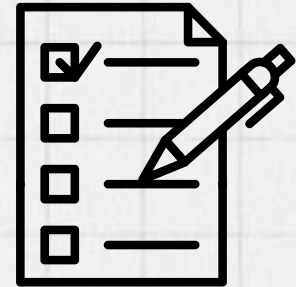


Creating a Successful Presentation



01 PREPARATION

The quality of your presentation is directly correlated with how much you prepare ahead of time! Know your topic well, and think about what you want the audience to know the most. Arrange your notes or script in a logical order. PRACTICE a lot beforehand. This will make you more relaxed and confident. Time yourself so you know how long your presentation will be and if it is within the time limits. Also remember that we often speak faster when we are nervous, so take that into consideration when timing.



EYE CONTACT AND FACIAL EXPRESSIONS 02

Maintaining eye contact shows that you are confident and helps you connect with the audience. You do NOT want to stare at the floor, your notes, the screen, or the computer! If you are nervous, focus on one person or a fixed point in the room, then, as you relax, you can start looking at others. Also, remember to smile and look friendly. This again shows that you are interested in the topic and the audience and displays confidence.

03 BODY LANGUAGE

Use appropriate gestures and body language. Avoid crossing your arms, putting your hands in your pockets or behind your back, swaying, or fidgeting. Stand up straight and do not lean against the wall or podium. If able, walk around the room and engage with the audience. Ask them questions or refer to someone as an example. This makes you seem more confident and helps keep their attention.



SPEAKING 04

Speak freely. Avoid reading off the slides or your notes. Your notes can help you keep on track and support you, but should not be a something you look at for the entire presentation. Speak slowly, loudly, and clearly. Avoid filler words like "Umm" or "like," as this displays a lack of confidence. Avoid empty phrases and clichés. Avoid foreign words, or, if you must use them, be sure to explain what they mean. Know how to pronounce words.

SEE THE BACK FOR WAYS TO USE VISUAL AIDS EFFECTIVELY



Using Visuals in Your Presentation



01 READABILITY

Use a simple font that is easy to read, especially from a distance; examples may be Arial, Times New Roman, or Calibri. Avoid using small print (anything under size 18), as this makes it difficult to read. Make sure the font color contrasts with the background enough that it is readable. If the background is dark, use a light-colored font; if the background is light, use a dark-colored font. Also, make sure you proofread; everyone will notice mistakes!



02 SLIDE SIMPLICITY

Use a simple background or template that is consistent throughout and not too distracting. Use bullet points or short sentences, and try to keep each only 1-2 lines. Avoid cramming too much text onto a slide. This can be visually overwhelming to the audience, and makes the font size smaller. Also beware of adding too many graphics or charts, as again, this can be overwhelming and hard to comprehend.

03 SPECIAL EFFECTS

Programs such as PowerPoint or Prezi can incorporate numerous special effects and transitions. Keep these simple. The audience will not be paying attention to you if they are distracted by words flying across the screen. Also avoid sound effects, as these can be loud and annoying.



04 TECHNOLOGY

Be prepared for technology snafus! Sometimes the projector, computer, or volume may not be working. Show up early to verify that everything is working. Note that sometimes programs may work on one computer and not another. Have multiple copies of your presentation in case one fails. If you have links embedded in your presentation, such as a video, have the video ready and loaded before you begin presenting. This ensures that the link is working and that your audience won't have to watch ads.

Sources:

- Rolleter, Bjorn. "Presentation skills: 15 tips for effective presentations." *CBS International Business School*, 15 April 2021. <https://www.cbs.de/en/blog/15-effective-presentation-tips-to-improve-presentation-skills/>
- "Tips for Creating and Delivering an Effective Presentation." *Microsoft*, 2024. <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/tips-for-creating-and-delivering-an-effective-presentation>.