

Developing an Oral Presentation

Brainstorming

1. Find a topic that interests you; if your topic is assigned, find an approach to the topic that interests you, and think about ways to get your audience interested as well.
 1. Keep an open mind about your topic. Try to be objective.
 2. Think about how a politician, single parent, retired bus driver, kindergartener, astronaut, or farmer might view your topic.
2. Consider approaches to your topic that are unique and will capture your audience's attention, and write those ideas down even if they seem off the wall; they may help you think of something more appropriate.
3. Narrow down your topic if needed, or you may need to expand your idea to cover the time requirements. In both cases, consider your audience. Put yourself in their place.
 - Expand a speech by considering what could use more explanation. Where can a video or personal story be inserted?
 - Shorten a speech by considering what information is common knowledge and should be cut from your speech. What information can be cut without affecting your speech?

Gathering/Developing

1. Locate information that is credible and relevant to your topic. Use the library, interviews, emails to experts, and personal experiences if applicable and permitted.
2. Think of ways to share what you found visually. Charts and graphs are helpful at times, but also consider taking photographs and creating videos.
3. Integrate oral citations into your speech; this will give you more credibility as a speaker.
 1. Provide the date, the type of resource, the title, the authors or publisher—whatever information is necessary for your audience to interpret the information.
 2. Try something like this for a website: "The USDA's website reported that in fiscal year 2009 more than 9 million people per month received supplemental nutrition through the WIC program."
 3. Try something like this for a book or journal: "Ken Robinson defines creativity in his 2010 book *Unlocking Creativity* as 'generating outcomes that are original and have value.'"
4. Organize the information you find in a way that will be most relevant to your audience. Found a funny quote? Use it first to hook your audience. Created a great video? Use it in the middle to spice things up. Uncovered a funny story? Consider using it last to sum up your talk and inspire your audience.

5. Provide transitions between your introduction, main points, and conclusions so that your audience can follow along as you present.

Practicing

1. Shorten the written portion of your speech as you practice. For example, you may start with a few pages or paragraphs that you can use to create an outline. After you practice some more, shorten your outline into a list of key words and sentences. This will help you stay organized, while enabling you to maintain eye contact with your audience.
2. Stand up and practice in front of other people; ask for their feedback. Sometimes we get so close to a topic we overlook a key point or skip a step that should be explained more clearly. (The Noel Studio is an excellent resource for practicing; book a practice room, schedule a consultant, and bring your speech or second assignment to your session.)
3. Develop visuals that reinforce your topic. If you want to appear knowledgeable and engaged in your topic, make sure your posture and hand movements come across that way. Also consider the way your slides/visuals are designed. Your words, body language, and visual aids should all work together.
 1. Smile if appropriate. You will feel better and so will your audience.
 2. Maintain eye contact. It lets your audience know you respect them, and it helps you read their interest level.
 3. Use comfortable gestures. Give your hands something to do during the speech so they can add to your message.
 4. Make your movements count. While you don't want to stay perfectly still during a presentation, you do want to be mindful of the movements you make during your speech. If you have the time and space, walk naturally in front of the room or among audience members.
 5. Dress appropriately. Your first impression begins before you open your mouth. The way you dress can express organization and authority. Also consider jewelry, makeup, and other accessories that will not distract your audience.
4. Feel comfortable pronouncing all your words. If you get tongue-tied on a sentence when you practice, you may want to rewrite it so you don't stumble during your presentation.
5. Time your presentation while practicing. Do a few run-throughs to be sure of your time.



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