

# Presentation Skills

A Guide to Preparing Powerful Presentations

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# PRESENTATION SKILLS OBJECTIVES:

Through engaging workbook activities and videos, this Presentation Skills session aims to walk students through the process of how to plan, prepare, practice, and present powerful presentations; students will utilize the information in this workbook every time they need to create a presentation.

## Self-Assessment

1. What would you say is one of your strengths as a presenter?

2. What skill(s) would you like to develop or improve? In other words, what is **your** objective for this Presentation Skills session?

# PRESENTATION SKILLS OBJECTIVES:

To be viewed before, during, and after the presentation planning process.

- Have I planned an adequate amount of time to work on my presentation? (1hr/1min Rule)
- Do I have all of the important information about my audience?
- Do I have a clear objective/walk-away message?
- Do I reinforce my walk-away message throughout my presentation?
- Do I have an effective “hook” to grab the attention of my audience?
- Do I follow my “hook” with stating my objective and then clearly defining the main points that I am going to be talking about in my presentation?
- Are the points of my presentation organized in a logical sequence?
- Do I have transitions between points that will help my presentation “flow”?
- Do my main points need support from visual aids?
- Do I have vivid examples to help illustrate each of my points?
- Does my conclusion summarize the presentation clearly and concisely?
- Have I tied my conclusion to my introduction and inspired the audience to take action?
- Am I knowledgeable and passionate about the topic covered in my presentation?
- Have I planned and practiced ways to engage the audience during my presentation?
- How will I present - what media will be used? Prezi? PowerPoint? Props? Poster? Nothing?
- Have I adhered to the 10:20:30 Rule? (Presentations should be no more than 10 slides, 20 minutes, and the font size should be no smaller than 30 pt)
- Have I anticipated the questions I will be asked and have I considered how I will respond to those questions?
- Do I have a back-up plan if my technology fails? A printout of my presentation?
- Where will I present? Have I visited the presentation site?
- Have I practiced my speech out loud, speaking slowly and clearly while projecting my voice?
- Have I paid close attention to my body language and posture while practicing?
- Have I timed myself or recorded myself?
- Are my visual aids easy to read and easy to understand?
- Are my visual aids properly linked to the points I am trying to communicate?
- Have I checked my visual aids to ensure they are working and that I know how to use them?
- Can images be easily seen from all areas of the room?
- Have I proofread all of the text on my slides and handouts to make sure that there are no mistakes?
- Have I made sure to be dressed and groomed appropriately for my presentation?
- Have I looked at the assessment criteria? Am I clear about expected content and duration?

# KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

The first step in planning for a presentation is to know your audience.

## Ask yourself:

- Have I planned an adequate amount of time to work on my presentation? (1hr/1min Rule)
- Who is my audience? (Relevant demographic information: age, occupation, economic status, education level, cultural background, etc.)
- What does the audience already know about my talk?
- How many people will be in the audience?
- Where am I going to present to this audience?
- What does the audience want? What do they expect from this presentation?
- What is the purpose of presenting to this audience? How will the audience benefit from this presentation?

“The quickest way to connect with an audience is to demonstrate that you understand their business, issues and concerns” (Koegel, 2007, pg. 128).

## How to learn more about your audience:

- Have I planned an adequate amount of time to work on my presentation? (1hr/1min Rule)
- Who is my audience? (Relevant demographic information: age, occupation, economic status, education level, cultural background, etc.)
- What does the audience already know about my talk?
- How many people will be in the audience?
- Where am I going to present to this audience?
- What does the audience want? What do they expect from this presentation?
- What is the purpose of presenting to this audience? How will the audience benefit from this presentation?

### Job Interview Tip:

Utilize the above criteria to prepare for a job interview. Companies want to see that you have researched their institutions. In your interview, you should not only highlight your strengths as a candidate, but you must show how your strengths align with the mission and values of the company for which you are interviewing with.

# KNOW YOUR WALK-AWAY MESSAGE

Start with the end in mind. After you have researched and studied your audience, you must determine a clear objective or walk-away message that is catered to their needs.

## What is a “walk-away message?”

Even the most attentive members of your audience will only remember a fraction of your presentation. Determine the most important messages that you want your audience to “walk away” with and then reinforce those messages throughout your presentation.

### Ask yourself:

- What is my purpose? Is my goal to educate? Persuade? Motivate? Inform?
- What do I want the audience to feel, know, or do differently after my presentation?
- Can I state in one clear sentence what my presentation objective is?

### In your introduction you can say:

*“If you remember one thing as you leave here today \_\_\_\_\_.”*

Restate your walk-away message in your conclusion. Make sure that your “call to action” is clear.

### In your conclusion you can restate:

*“My purpose today was to help you understand how to \_\_\_\_\_.”*

### Tell your audience exactly:

- What specific action they need to take
- How they should take that action
- When the action must be taken
  
- “Use this workbook as a guide for creating presentations.”
- “Follow the steps outlined in this workbook.”
- “Use this workbook for your presentation that you have to give at the end of the summer.”

# MODELS FOR STRUCTURING YOUR PRESENTATION

Now that you have established a clear objective for your audience, it is important to frame your most important points and ideas in a structured way. Every presentation should have a beginning, middle, and an end. One method to start the outlining process is by recording all of your thoughts on paper. Once you have done this, you can organize and prioritize your main points.

## **Activity: Practice the following Brainstorming Methods:**

Freewriting:

Mind Mapping:

**Writing Tip:** Use these same methods of brainstorming and planning not just for presentations, but also for your writing assignments.

# WRITE A STRONG INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION

There is much evidence to support that people tend to only remember the first and last thing that they hear. This is called the primacy and recency effect. Therefore, you should make the opening and closing of your presentation memorable.

## Crafting an Introduction:

Ideally, an audience should not only listen to your presentation, but they should understand what you are saying and be influenced to take action. You only have a narrow window of time in your introduction to captivate your audience with a “hook.” A hook is the attention grabber with which you start your presentation. If you do not capture your audience’s attention from the beginning, then they will not listen to what you have to say, which means they won’t make an effort to understand you, nor will they act. You **MUST** grab your audience’s attention right from the start!

## Tell your audience exactly:

- Startling Fact or Statistic
- Give Examples
- Relevant Quotation
- Tell a Joke
- Pose a Question
- Use Realia or a Prop
- Tell a Story

*What was the “hook” for this Presentation Skills class?*

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Don’t spend too much time on your “hook”; grab the audience’s attention, state your main objective, and then outline what you are going to discuss in your presentation:

*“My purpose today is \_\_\_\_\_ . I am going to outline three ways you can utilize \_\_\_\_\_ in order to make your business better.”*

## Ask yourself:

The purpose of a conclusion is to reinforce your main points and reiterate your main objective. You should tell your audience what specific action you would like them to take. If you do not have a strong conclusion, your presentation will be flat and your message will be lost. The following are ways to end your presentation:

- Summarize your main points
- Tie it in with your Introduction/“hook”
- Look ahead to the future: Next Steps, Action Plan



# P. R. E. P. MODEL:

## A Formula to Keep You Focused on the Topic (Storey, 2014)

Once you know your audience, and objective, and you have a map of your main points, you can develop each point using the P.R.E.P. Model. This will allow you to keep your presentation simple, clean, and focused.

**Tip:** main points should be arranged logically with clear and easy to follow transitions in between:

*“Now that we have discussed \_\_\_\_\_ . I want to talk about \_\_\_\_\_.”*

### POINT:

(Make your point in ten words or less.)

### REASON:

(Support your point by providing a clear reason why your audience should remember and understand your point.)

### EXAMPLE:

(Give an example that will help illustrate your point and reason – examples from real life, story/parable, case study, analogy, statistic, etc.)

### POINT:

(Restate your point. What is the main idea that you want your audience to remember? How will the audience benefit?)

# USE OF VISUAL AIDS & PROPER WORD CHOICE

Most people retain information better when it is presented visually in addition to audibly. Incorporating visual aids can enhance your presentation especially if they support and clarify your message.

Visual aids not only illustrate your points, but they can serve as visual cues for you to remember what you want to say.

Be careful not to inundate your audience with distracting images or complex charts and graphs.

## Remember:

- Use visual aids sparingly
- Only use high-resolution images and graphics
- Make sure that visuals can be seen from the last row of your audience
- Avoid miscellaneous visuals that make your slides look “busy”
- Present one key point per visual (i.e. avoid having too many lists and bullet points)
- Avoid slides with light text on a dark background
- Use light colored backgrounds – use color carefully
- Do away with decorative images on your slides; they can be distracting – ask yourself, “Does this need to be included?”
- Test equipment and have a back-up plan
- Do not walk in front of the projector
- Keep your face to the audience
- Bring a hard copy of your presentation
- Make sure you have an electronic copy of your presentation as a backup (email it to yourself)
- Utilize handouts if there is a lot of information that can’t fit on a slide

## Word Choice

As business school students, you will come to realize, if you haven’t already, the importance of each word that you use when communicating. You must put thought into how you choose words. In order to convey your message clearly you should **keep language simple**.

- Be clear, be appropriate, and be vivid
- Avoid using jargon that could confuse your audience
- Avoid absolutes such as ‘never’ and ‘always’- these words invite people to prove you wrong
- Come to the Writing Center for help with appropriate word choice

# KEEP YOUR AUDIENCE ENGAGED

Once you have a well-structured and well-designed presentation, you must practice bringing your message to life. You should practice delivering your presentation with passion and conviction. In addition, you should think of ways to engage your audience during your presentation. If you don't attempt to engage your audience, then your message will be lost.

*"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." - Chinese Proverb*

## Ways to engage your audience:

- Phrase your points and examples in the form of a question so that the audience can participate in your presentation.
- Ask questions and wait for a response. Examples:

*"Raise your hand if \_\_\_\_\_?"*

*"How many of you have ever \_\_\_\_\_?"*

*"True or false? \_\_\_\_\_?"*

- Ask the audience for their opinion.
- Encourage audience participation through partner or group activities.

**Tip:** *Audience members who expect to participate pay closer attention than those who don't expect to participate.*

- Ask someone to read a quote or an example aloud.
- Have the audience actively fill in an outline.
- Use vivid stories, examples, or video clips that match your message and help to illustrate your points.
- Reward audience members for a correct response (recognition or a piece of candy).

**Tip:** *Never read from your slides.*

*Reading from your slides tells your audience that you are not prepared nor are you knowledgeable on the topic of which you are presenting. Also, your audience can read faster than you can speak so you will likely have lost them.*

# NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Research has shown that the way people retain information is less from the actual words and more from the context in which the information is presented. People learn 7% from what they hear, 38% the way words are said, and 55% from what they see. Therefore, our voice and our body language must be congruent with our words.

## **Activity: Analyze Nonverbal cues in the “Friends” video:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OvEci5Bjgd4>

## **Body Language Dos and Don'ts:**

### **Do:**

- Connect with your audience
- Smile (genuine, not phony)
- Appear natural and relaxed
- Keep your arms and hands at your side; use appropriate hand gestures
- Be aware of your posture; stand with your shoulders back
- Stand tall and on the balls of your feet, make a V
- Make eye contact for 3-4 seconds with people from all parts of the room
- Move with purpose, energy and enthusiasm
- Pause, which allows you to breathe and remain calm

### **Don't:**

- Rock, sway, shuffle or lean
- Slouch
- Clasp your hands behind your back
- Look down
- Put your hands in your pockets
- Do the “T-Rex” stance
- Fidget
- Grab or touch inanimate objects like chairs
- Read from your notes
- Turn your back to the audience

### **Homework Assignment:**

*Go out in public. Study the body language of others in addition to being aware of your own. Stand tall with your shoulders back. Make eye contact with different people for at least three seconds each. Offer them a smile. **Do you feel more confident?***

# PRACTICE TIPS AND WAYS TO IMPROVE

- Know your introduction and conclusion cold
- Rehearse your presentation at least three times
- Practice to remember ideas, not words
- Practice out loud, preferably in front of someone who can give you constructive feedback
- Practice from your notecards
- Practice in “chunks,” or divide up your presentation so that it is easier to remember the main points of each section
- Record yourself
- Listen to the recording of yourself while you are doing mundane tasks
- Practice your presentation using your visual aids
- Time yourself
- Speak naturally and in a conversational tone
- Utilize vocal variety
- Eliminate “Ums”, “Uhs” and other “filler” language from your vocabulary (e.g. “Basically, Actually, Really, To be honest, In my opinion, I think, etc.”).
- Watch TED Talks to study not only how presenters gesture and move, but also how they have structured their presentations.

**Activity: Watch this TED Talk:** [http://www.ted.com/talks/ric\\_elias](http://www.ted.com/talks/ric_elias)  
**“The three things I learned while my plane crashed”**

- Analyze the structure of the presentation
- Analyze the nonverbal communication and delivery
- Discuss with class

## **Homework Assignment:**

Go to: [www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)

Search: Amy Cuddy

Select Amy Cuddy: *Your body language shapes who you are*

*“Amy Cuddy’s research on body language reveals that we can change other people’s perceptions – and even our own body chemistry – simply by changing body positions.”*

**Practice your 2 minute “Power Pose” every day and do it before you present!**

# MANAGING TIME AND ENVIRONMENT

## Example structure of a 20 minute Presentation

Opening:	2 minutes
Middle:	13 minutes
Closing:	2 minutes
Questions:	5 minutes

## Tips to effectively manage time and environment:

- Always arrive early to your presentation (at least 30-45 minutes in advance)
- Ensure that the room is set up correctly – do you need to move tables and/or chairs?
- Test microphone and all other equipment to ensure that it works
- Bring a bottle of water
- Make sure that you have a clock in your view so that you can keep track of time
- After you have taken care of the logistics above, you should be available to meet and greet audience members
- Start conversations – remember information from these conversations so that you can refer back
- Start on time; respect your audience’s time
- If, due to unforeseen circumstances, you are informed that you have less time than you were originally given, you should leave out information instead of “rushing through”
- End on time – never go over your allotted time; your audience will focus on the fact that you are taking up their time and then your message will be lost

# NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Always leave time (at least 5 minutes) at the end of your presentation for questions, assessment and/or feedback.

Preparing for a presentation doesn't just mean organizing your message; it often requires you to gain a deeper understanding of the topic on which you are presenting. Simply put, you should know significantly more about your topic than your audience. If you are thoroughly prepared, then you will be able to address most questions.

## Tips for answering questions:

- Don't try to answer a question that you don't know the answer to; Try saying:  
"I am not sure about \_\_\_\_\_, but I will look into it and contact you."
- Answer in a conversational tone
- Answer concisely
- Keep your composure and be tactful in your response (don't get defensive if someone asks a difficult question)
- Break down difficult questions in to parts and answer each one at a time
- Repeat and rephrase the question:
- Try not to compliment one question over another

## Use the Q-BEST-Q Formula:

**Q** Repeat the **question**

**B** State the **bottom line** (short and sweet)

**E** Give **evidence** to support

**S** **Summarize** and restate your bottom line

**T** Be aware of **time**

**Q** Ask: Have I answered your **question?**

# MINIMIZING NERVOUSNESS

Nervous? You're not alone! 75% of people identify themselves as having some sort of speech anxiety. The key is to harness that nervous energy and use it to propel you forward in delivering your message with passion and enthusiasm. Use nervous energy to create positive results!

**Ask yourself, "Which mental approach will I take?"**

**Option A:** *"Oh my gosh, every eye in the place is staring at me. I have to stand here for thirty minutes and speak to this group."*

**Option B:** *"I have critical information that can make a positive difference for the people in this room. I have thirty minutes to help them understand this information. Let's get started."*

**Focus on your message** and the audience instead of focusing on yourself. It's not about you. It's about the message to your audience.

## More techniques to minimize nervousness:

- Memorize the first two minutes: not word for word, but know it "cold" so that you feel comfortable; starting off on the right foot can set the tone for the rest of your presentation.
- Utilize cheat sheets in the form of handouts: Write one word on a handout, which will serve as a cue to help you remember your point.
- Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse! Rehearse out loud in front of a mirror or a friend; don't forget to practice projecting your voice as well as moving naturally around the room (see nonverbal communication p.12).
- Break up your presentation into 3 Minute Segments.
- Take deep breaths.
- Be aware of your body position.
- Don't drink caffeine, carbonated water, juices or cold water. They can make you anxious, gassy, or they can constrict your throat.
- Avoid large meals.
- Greet people as they arrive; mingling beforehand helps you relax.
- Visualize Success: picture yourself delivering an awesome presentation!



# APPROPRIATE APPEARANCE/ATTIRE

You can never get a second chance at a first impression. Research shows that people judge you within the first few seconds of seeing you. It is critical that you not only carry yourself in a professional manner, but you must also dress appropriately for all occasions.

Your attire is the first thing your audience will see when they walk into your presentation. They will be more open to your message if you carry yourself with confidence and if you're dressed in appropriate yet comfortable clothing.

Try your outfit on ahead of time to be sure it fits well and allows you to move comfortably.



## For Men:

- Make sure facial hair is trimmed and neat
- Your tie should be conservative, without odd prints or cartoon characters, and its color should not attract attention
- Be prepared and bring a backup tie or coat in case something goes wrong
- Presenting without your blazer can make you seem friendlier to your audience



## For Women:

- Understated makeup
- Low heels (or flats if heels are uncomfortable)
- No cleavage or short skirts (skirts should be at or below knee level)
- Keep your hair out of your eyes and away from your face
- Avoid shiny jewelry that could distract your audience
- Avoid tight clothing as it draws attention to your body instead of your message
- A cardigan or blazer looks professional, but presenting without it can make you seem friendlier to you audience

# INDIVIDUAL PRESENTATION EVALUATION FORM

<b>The Speaker:</b>	<b>Agree</b>					<b>Disagree</b>				
<b>1.</b> Clearly identified & addressed an intended audience	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>					
<b>2.</b> Gave an effective introduction that caught my attention	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>					
<b>3.</b> Made the thesis of the talk clear in the introduction	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>					
<b>4.</b> Identified and addressed a specific problem	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>					
<b>5.</b> Articulated an argument built on sound evidence	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>					
<b>6.</b> Established information sources and their credibility	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>					
<b>7.</b> Effectively addressed counterarguments and obstacles	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>					
<b>8.</b> Organized the talk well (unity, coherence, transitions)	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>					
<b>9.</b> Provided effective concluding remarks	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>					
<b>10.</b> Made good use of time	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>					
<b>11.</b> Made good use of A/V	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>					
<b>12.</b> Engaged the audience effectively	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>					
<b>13.</b> Pronounced words clearly and was easy to follow	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>					
<b>14.</b> Used effective volume and pacing	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>					
<b>15.</b> Used effective non-verbal communication	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>					

**Comments:**

# STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER SERVICES

This workbook is intended to not only walk you through the process of preparing a presentation, but it also should serve as a guide for creating future presentations. If you follow the steps in this workbook, you can prepare an effective and well-structured presentation. However, **in order to improve as a presenter, you must continue to practice!**

***Go back to page #3. Did we address your objectives in today's session?***

The Student Success Center offers tutoring not only for Writing, but also for Presentation Skills. We can help with everything from brainstorming and structuring to providing feedback on your delivery and nonverbal communication.

**Book an Appointment** any time by going to the Student Success Center website:

<http://carey.jhu.edu/ssc>

## **Contact Information:**

Please email [carey.tutoring@jhu.edu](mailto:carey.tutoring@jhu.edu) for all questions about Student Success Center tutoring and workshops, or please contact your Instructional Coach directly:

Harbor East – Marisa Alger (410) 234-9345; [marisa.alger@jhu.edu](mailto:marisa.alger@jhu.edu)

Washington D.C. – Kristina Tipps (202) 650-6032; [Kristina.tipps@jhu.edu](mailto:Kristina.tipps@jhu.edu)

*The Student Success Center will offer Advanced Presentation Skills workshops in the fall where you will have the opportunity to practice delivering a presentation as well as build upon the fundamental presentation skills outlined in this workbook.*

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**If you are interested in attending a fall workshop on Advanced Presentation Skills, please provide your email below, tear off, and give to your instructor.**

# REFERENCES

**Koegel, T. J. (2007)**

The exceptional presenter (First Ed.). Austin, TX: Greenleaf Book Group Press.

**Storey, K. K. (2014)**

12 Principles for powerful presentation skills. Baltimore, MD: Interactive Training.

# PRESENTATION OUTLINE SHEET

Presentation to (Audience):

Date:

Time:

What is the most important message you want your audience to remember?

My Purpose (Mission/Objective/Goal/Walk-Away Message) is:

Point #1: (PREP)

Point #2 (PREP)

Point #3 (PREP)

Restatement of Purpose:

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Date:

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