

Making an Oral Presentation

When making an oral presentation in class, you must know your subject well and convince your audience that they have something to gain from listening to you. Here are some things you can do to make an effective oral presentation.

- **Be prepared.** Research your subject to ensure that you are knowledgeable. Practice your presentation until you feel comfortable. Make sure you can present your information within whatever time limits you will have. Anticipate questions you may be asked and prepare answers to these.
- **Know your audience.** Tailor your presentation to your audience's level of knowledge about the subject of your presentation, what they need to know, and their interests.
- **Be positive.** Make it clear that you are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about your subject.
- **Don't read your presentation.** Talk to your audience. Use your notes as prompts as needed.
- **Provide examples.** Try to make your presentation as concrete and "down to earth" as possible. Add appropriate anecdotes and humor to drive home a point.
- **Use visual aids.** Supplement what you say with visual aids such as handouts, charts, transparencies, and slides. Make sure that everyone can easily see the visual aids. Don't use visual aids that are so complex that the audience will spend its time trying to read them instead of listening to you. Visual aids are supplements to what you say, not replacements for what you say.
- **Maintain eye contact.** Shift your eye contact around the room so that everyone feels that you are talking to them.
- **Actively involve your audience.** People can only listen so long without their attention wandering. Making your presentation interesting will help you to capture and keep your audience's attention for a while, but you must do more. Build in some simple and quick activities for your audience so that they are actively involved in your presentation. Ask questions that you are confident your audience will be able to answer.
- **Use your voice effectively.** Vary the tone of your voice and be careful not to talk too quickly.
- **End on a high note.** Leave your audience feeling upbeat about what they have just heard.

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