

Oral Presentation Tips

- Keep the number of slides within a range of the time limit (20 mins/aprox. 20 slides). A general rule of thumb is one slide per minute. It takes awhile to absorb what is on the slide.
- Include a title slide with your name on it at the start and a reference slide with references at the end.
- Provide in text citations where appropriate on each slide. Can be in line in a smaller font size (author/s last name and year) or can be at bottom of the slide in a smaller font size (author/s last name and year or full citation)
- Minimize the text on each slide.
- Use phrases, not complete sentences, to prompt you; you do not want the audience to read the slide, but instead they should listen to you. The most common exception to this is your hypothesis/purpose statement: this should be clearly stated in sentence form in your Introduction.
- Engage your audience. Why is this interesting to you? What motivated this study? Use a pointer to highlight what you're showing on the screen. Keep your voice energetic.
- Present brief objective/hypothesis and methods.
- Show a photograph or image of your experimental set up if it is not easily visualized. Images and photos can help engage your audience.
- Present your data using a graph or table and explain your results orally, using your data to illustrate your points.
- If you are showing a graph, first orient your audience to the figure itself. State the title, identify the axes, explain any symbols, and THEN point out the pattern in the data. Similarly, identify the columns and rows in a table before launching into the results.
- Try not to overwhelm your audience with data/information on any one slide. Usually one graph or table per slide is enough for your audience to process.
- On a 'Conclusions' slide, provide a concluding take-home message that refers back to your hypothesis/purpose statement. You may want to show your original hypothesis/purpose statement again on this slide for reference to remind your audience what you were investigating. Answer the "so what" question. The audience should leave your presentation with a clear message of what they learned.
- Discuss sources of error in your conclusion, and suggest what your next step would be if you were continuing this investigation.
- Keep your conclusions within the scope of what you did: if you found that orange juice makes ants fall asleep, you cannot conclude that fruit juice will make elephants fall asleep more easily.
- PRACTICE in front of an audience. Project your talk on a screen so you can make sure your figures and tables are legible. Time yourself to make sure you're within the time limit of the assignment, and ask your practice audience if your pace is good and understandable.
- Be professional, but don't be afraid to show some personality during your talk either.
- Do not hide behind the podium if there is one. Move around be dynamic in your presentation.
- Focus on your audience, minimize the amount of time you spend looking at the screen while talking. You should have the presentation memorized enough to not need to look at the slides while speaking.