

Information to Help You

A presentation includes three major parts. They are the: 1. Introduction, 2. Body, and 3. Conclusion.

1. The INTRODUCTION captures the attention of the audience. It introduces the central thought of the presentation and appeals to the interests of this audience. It can make the first request for action from the listener.
2. The BODY presents the major points through discussion, facts, visuals and examples. This is the longest section of the presentation.
3. The CONCLUSION restates the central thought and summarizes the major highlights of the presentation. It makes a final appeal to the audience for action. It alerts the listeners that you are coming to the end of the presentation and provides a final, memorable statement to the group.

Identify Key Ideas First

Don't start gathering resources until you have listed two to five major ideas or thoughts you want your listeners to know. These will guide your search.

Use a folder or notebook to collect ideas for a presentation topic. Your own experience is a perfect place to begin exploring. Talk to volunteers in 4-H and other organizations to collect ideas. Use ideas from books or magazines you've read, and from other speakers you've heard.

Hints for Using Resources

- Use examples from your own experience whenever possible.
- Make sure materials you use are relevant to the topic.
- All materials should be in good taste.
- Provide enough support material to reinforce your point, but not so much that it will bore the audience.
- When citing examples, *three* is the magic number. Fewer is often not enough, more is often too many.
- Use statistics sparingly, round off numbers, and use them in ways the listener will understand easily. (E.g., Say "the distance across this room" instead of "32 feet").
- When you use facts from other materials, tell the audience your source, make sure the facts are accurate and use them in the context the original author intended.

1. Develop a Catchy Introduction

A good introduction is like a handshake; it introduces you in a friendly way. An attention-getter during the introduction makes the audience react positively and makes you feel successful. Don't crowd your opening with all the good ideas you can think of, or you'll confuse the listeners! Identify a group interest and build on it, to capture their attention.

When you capture the listener's attention, you make them want to listen. If you don't get the listeners' attention early, their thoughts may wander and never hear what you're saying.

There are many ways to capture the listener's attention. Pages ?? - ?? Share great ideas. Have fun using your imagination too!

It turns out that people relate to each other, but things such as, a common experience, a story, a familiar saying, or the stimulating words of an admired person. A good attention getter, therefore, is good for overcoming your fear during those challenging minutes when you first face your audience.

(Taken from: *Painless Public Speaking* by Sharon Anthony Bower. Published by Prentice-Hall Inc. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1981. pp. 58-59).

2. Develop the Main Points of the Presentation

You can express one idea many different ways. Create messages that best suit your personal style. Your style, combined with several hints listed below will help you communicate your message effectively.

The human mind can remember at least three things about a subject without too much difficulty. As the amount of information increases, the ability to remember decreases. You can help listeners remember by including:

- REPETITION to reinforce memory.
- AN ILLUSTRATION (example, story or visual) to help recall an important point.
- A message aimed at GROUP INTEREST to increase their desire and ability to remember.

Hints to Help Develop the Main Points

- Discuss less complicated points first.
- Discuss the least controversial points first.
- Present complex material in a logical order.
- Present material in “bite-size” pieces to keep the listener’s attention focused.
- Repeat an important point before moving on to discuss another point.

- Use stories, personal experiences or humor to add interest and reinforce each point.
- Picture words (descriptive words, e.g., fuzzy brown rabbits; 10 jumping 8-year-olds) help individuals visualize what you say and keep the listener interested.
- Use short sentences. They are easier for you to use and easier for listeners to remember. Less than 12 words per sentence helps the listener understand your message.

- Speak in an active voice, instead of the passive voice. (E.g., “We taught the lesson.” Rather than “The lesson was taught by a committee.”)
- Keep the presentation free of mistakes, so listeners will concentrate on the message instead of the mistakes.
- Don’t rush the delivery . . . Make sure major points are clear and repeated as necessary. Listeners need time to absorb your message.

3. Develop a Memorable Conclusion

The conclusion of your presentation wraps up the message into a neat package. It should reinforce the major points of the presentation so listeners will recall them later.

The conclusion may take one of three forms:

- A Summary of Points – can restate each major point with only one or two sentences.
- A Story – can be memorable and reinforce the overall message.
- A Quotation – can reinforce the message. (E.g. “I would like to conclude with the words of a song that relate to this topic, and have made a great impression on me. . .”)

The same example or facts discussed in the introduction may be repeated in the conclusion.

A summary of points designed to influence the action of the audience: “I’m asking you to vote for this bond issue, not only for the many things I’ve told you the money will be used for – but for yourselves. To increase the value of your own property, to give you greater pride in your city, to enable you to raise your children . . . and educate them in schools with modern equipment . . . So do yourself a favor by voting YES for this bond issue.

Length of Conclusion

Plan concise concluding remarks. Seventy-five to 150 words should be enough to sum up your presentation. Just as your introduction helps the audience adjust to your presence and topic, the conclusion gives your audience enough time to recall the theme of your message and adjust to your departure.

Listeners tend to *remember first and last statements*. Give these crucial moments of your presentation special attention. While experts recommend that you NOT memorize your entire presentation, *it is helpful* to memorize your introduction and conclusion. This insures you will get off to a good start, even if you are nervous, and the group will remember your message, by the well planned conclusion.

The introduction and conclusion puts the head and tail on the body of your presentation. Without them, or with them not fully developed, you don’t have a complete presentation and it will be evident to your listeners.

(Adapted from: *Effective Presentation Skills* by Stevel Mandel. Published by Crisp Publications, Inc., 1987, p. 23.)

Using Transitions

Transitions connect parts of the presentation. Transition words or phrases allow you to move smoothly from one point to another, developing relationships to help listeners understand your message.

Transitions can be used between the three major parts of a presentation, and within each part. Use transitions:

- Between the Introduction and Body. (“I will identify five reasons . . .”)
- Between Major Points with the Body. (“In addition to that, we need to . . . Otherwise, we will not be able . . . and consequently the 4-Hers . . .”)
- Between the Body and Conclusion. (“So this means we must . . .”)

These Sample Words can Help Accomplish the Following Transitions:

- Further, besides, also, finally, again – to add a point.
- But, despite, however, on contrary, yet – to contrast one point with another.
- Consequently, therefore, accordingly – to identify a result of an activity.
- Either, both, not only, on the other hand – to link two alternate points.
- When, then inasmuch as – to identify a cause of a major point.
- So this means, to be sure, in reality – to repeat and emphasize a point.
- Points are, first, then, followed by, next – to call attention to next point.

Using Humor

An entertaining presentation can be filled with humorous stories that are unrelated to one another, except for transition words or phrases. Humor is a great way to break the ice in other presentations too. But beware! Humor must be linked to either the speaker, topic, audience or the occasion then.

E.g., Be patient with a child . . . “A man was taking a walk with his son in Central Park. The child was kicking, screaming and causing a scene. Amazingly, the father remained calm and kept saying, ‘Michael, take it easy. Michael, control yourself.’ Finally a woman approached the distressed father and said, ‘I’m a teacher in a special education school, and I must say I admire your self control. You have a fine looking boy. And his name is Michael?’ ‘No’ the father said, ‘his name is Johnny. MY name is Michael.’”

(Taken from: *Talk Power* by Natalie H. Rogers. Published by Dodd, Mead and Company, NY. 1982, p. 50)

Planning Your Time

There are approximately 150 words in each speaking minute. If you have seven minutes for a presentation, you will prepare approximately 1,050 words. Consider this time schedule as a guide:

5% Introduction
80% Discussion of Main Points
15% Conclusion

Information to Help You

Unit 2.6
Developing the Presentation
Handout B, 6

This schedule can be used for a 15 minute or 60 minute presentation. The amount of group participation, discussion, explanation, examples, or visuals is adjusted to fit the total amount of time allowed. For seven minutes, you'll plan:

- 1 minute to capture attention and present introductory information;
- 4 minutes to state and discuss major point(s);
- 2 minutes to reinforce, repeat and conclude.

Use only the amount of time allotted for your presentation. Taking more time will inconvenience the group and you will lose their attention.

They tell the story of Wilton Lackaye, who was scheduled to speak on the program at a banquet at which all the speakers had been brutally long-winded. Finally the chairman introduced Lackaye, saying, "Wilton Lackaye, the famous actor, will now give you his address." Lackaye faced the haggard audience and said, "Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, my address is the Lamb's Club, New York." He sat down to a tremendous ovation.

(Taken from: *Talk-Power* by Natalie H. Rogers. Published by Dodd, Mead & Company, New York. 1982. p. 68)

SMART PLANNING = EFFECTIVE USE OF TIME

Practice Your Presentation

1. Remember the presentation by learning it well.
2. Develop spontaneity by practicing with gestures and the visuals.
3. Imagine the group's reaction as you practice.
4. Develop your style. Be natural.
5. Use the visual aid(s) as you practice.
6. Critique your presentation as you plan and practice. Be honest with yourself. Your aim is not to be perfect . . . but rather, the best you can be.

Practice your presentation while you are doing daily chores, brushing your teeth or bouncing a ball! This will train you to speak and move at the same time, spontaneously. You will have to focus on two things at once. This skill comes in handy when you are communicating your ideas and "listening" to body language during a presentation.