ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Oral presentations can be scary but with preparation, practice and reflection you can develop your skills to become a confident and articulate public speaker.

PREPARATION

"He who fails to prepare is preparing for failure"

1. Define the purpose of your presentation and narrow down the main idea. Have a clear idea of the message you want your audience to know by the end of your talk.

2. Know your audience: the size of the audience, why they are there to listen to you, what they already know about your topic. Taylor your presentation to meet the criteria you need to address and the audience you are speaking to.

3. Know the length of time you need to speak for and stick to it. When you are speaking in public it is tempting to speed up when you talk, but try to speak a little slower than usual, aiming for about 125-150 words per minute. Ensure any technical equipment you use is ready and working so you don't waste time.

ORGANISATION

Just like an essay, a presentation needs a beginning, middle and an end.

1. The introduction should grab the audience's attention, state your purpose and give an outline of your talk.

2. The body provides the evidence and examples in a logical sequence, developing the main points and indicating when you are moving on to a different issue. Visual aids such as hand-outs, pictures, power point, whiteboard or diagrams can be really useful in communicating with your audience.

3. The conclusion is a clear summary linking back to the introduction and the questions you set out to answer. You may invite questions at this point.

DELIVERY

Good delivery is a vital part of effective presentations.

1. Eye contact: Reading a speech or presentation word for word is guaranteed to lose your audience. If possible, use note cards, bullet points or key ideas. If you must write the entire presentation down, ensure you practice it enough so that you are able to look at your audience (not the floor, walls, ceiling, windows, tables...your audience will be drawn to look at where your eyes go).

2. Speech: Wait until everyone is listening before beginning. Then, speak slowly and clearly, projecting your voice so that the entire audience can hear. Don't be afraid to pause, especially if you need to find your place in your notes. Avoid rambling at all costs and words such as "umm", "like", "you know..."

3. Posture: Stand tall, with your shoulders back and smile. Your facial expressions and body language can communicate how you are feeling so be aware of how you carry yourself.

HANDLING QUESTIONS

1. Try to anticipate questions so you can address these in your presentation or consider how to answer them afterwards.

2. If necessary, repeat the question to confirm your understanding of it and use your body language to show the person asking the question that you are listening and focused.

3. Provide an answer as soon as possible. When you do so, be brief, specific and pleasant. If you don't know the answer, just say so. Others in the audience may be able to help you.

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SELF-ASSESSMENT ON ORAL PRESENTATIONS

Self-reflection and assessment are vital components to improve your skills and confidence in giving presentations. It is also important to take the time to get feedback from other students and review the comments in your lecturer's notes. Being aware of your own strengths and weaknesses is an important step in developing your ability to give effective presentations.

CAMPION COLLEGE AUSTRALIA

Element of presentation Process	Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
I start by defining my purpose.				
I analyse my audience before writing an oral presentation.				
I match my presentation length to the allotted time.				
I begin my oral presentations with an attention-getting introduction.				
I look for ways to build credibility as a speaker.				
I cover only a few main points in the body of my presentation.				
I use transitions to help listeners follow my ideas.				
I review my main points and describe the next steps in the close.				
I practice my presentation before-hand				
I prepare in advance for questions and objections.				
I conclude oral presentations by summarizing my main ideas.				