

## Tips for Presentations

- **Keep it simple**  
There is a healthy balance between making a PowerPoint entertaining and making it a distraction. Try to keep the slides to a couple of lines of text and perhaps one picture or graphic. Never have more than three full sentences of text unbroken. Do not let your PowerPoint overshadow your speech.
- **Say what's important**  
To you everything is important. Let's face it, you just did a semester's worth of research on your topic, but you must decide what is the most important points you would like to make. You must take a twenty-page paper and turn into a twenty minute presentation. The audience does not need to know everything you know, just the important facts that support the thesis.
- **Make sure the audience stays interested**  
You do not want to do a presentation that nobody save you and .1% of the world's population understands. Make sure it stays professional, but the point of your PowerPoint is not to show how much smarter you are than someone else, but to help people ignorant of your topic learn something. Define terms if your audience might not know what they mean.
- **Practice for a set time**  
Depending on how long your presentation is, practice your presentation to be two to three minutes longer than the maximum length. You will always speed up during the real deal, so make sure your presentation is still long enough when it does occur.
- **Practice over-enunciating your words.**  
Over-enunciating will help you slow your speech down. Since you will speak faster giving the presentation than in practice. slowing down your speech in practice will help keep you from speaking too fast during the presentation.
- **Practice, practice, practice**  
Public speaking for most people is not an easy thing to do. The more you practice in front of other people or yourself in a mirror, the better you will become and the more comfortable you will be when it is time for the real thing. Practice at least once in the actual room you will be using.
- **Make eye contact with the audience.**  
Read from notes or the computer screen, looking up frequently to make eye contact with the audience. Having to crane your neck to read the projected screen is awkward. You may want to memorize parts of your presentation.
- **Avoid the nervous "ums."** The practice of simply reading your notes several times will help you get used to saying the words you plan to use. The result will be a smoother presentation.
- **Avoid the foot shuffle.** Be aware of your body when you present. Stand up tall, relax, and keep your feet planted firmly on the ground. Shuffling back and forth can make your audience seasick, so don't do it.
- **Speak up.** No matter how fascinating your topic is, it won't do you any good if your audience can't hear or understand you.

*by Justin Doyle and Lauren Johnson, Presbyterian College Writing Center tutors*