

Presentations Guide

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Audience

- Know your audience.
- Typically, you can assume that your audience is scientists with an undergraduate educational level in atmospheric science.

Timing of Presentations

- Know your presentation length and practice to ensure your maximum length is less than the length so there is time for questions.
- Your presentation length should be within 10 % of the length given to you for the presentation.

Slide Composition

- Don't use a background where your text is difficult to read.
- Limit each slide to one main idea.
- Use several simple slides rather than one complicated slide.
- Use duplicate slides if you need to refer to the same slide at several points during your talk. Repeat information on two slides instead of flipping between slides.
- Plan your slides for good visual pace.

Slide Organization

- Title slide should have a maximum of 2-3 lines of text and contain information such as the speaker's name, organizational credits, date and location of presentation.
- Body slides should all use the same type-face & color scheme.
- One or two summary slides should sum up your central message of the presentation.
- Finish slides (1 or 2 slides) can be a “thank you for your attention” or “staff acknowledgments” or a nice sunset.
- You can include additional slides after your finish slides that address questions that you anticipate.

Number of Slides

- A rule of thumb for the upper limit on number of slides is the number of minutes minus 10 % and then round down.
☞ For example, 15 minutes minus 10% = $15 - 1.5 = 13.5$ slides.
- Give more time for data, less time for text. Between one to two minutes per slide.

Text Slides

- Making bullet statements of central message or summary points.
- Stating objectives, hypotheses or test predictions.
- Outlining highlights or research protocol.
- Summarizing methods of data collection.
- Citing seminal works or quotes.

Text Tips

- Use style formatting to define all text in presentation.
- Do not use abbreviation unless necessary to fit on the slide. Don't assume the audience will know what the abbreviation represents.
- Use bullet statements or an outline.
- Use 5 lines with 5 words per line. No more the 6 or 7 lines per slide.
- Avoid red type.
- Choose an easy-to-read font. Liberation font is good because it is an open source fonts that is on most computer systems.
- Use a font as large as possible and still have things fit on the slide.
- Avoid all caps. It is harder to read.
- Use 1.5 line spacing when possible.
- Make sure sentences end with a period and header lines have the first letters of major words capitalized.
- Check all spelling!

Tables

- Good for showing specific data values.
- Don't show a table of tiny words and numbers.
- Condense the data to what is relevant.
- Use no more than 4 columns and 3 lines in a table.
- Simplify column headings.

Digital Pictures

- You can use pictures to make a point.
- Pictures are good to include in the Method section.
- Pictures break up the monotony of text and figures.
- Use as "eye candy" for finish slides.
- Should only use high quality pictures with good contrast.
- Lighter pictures are more successful than darker pictures.

Illustrations

- Copies from textbooks or blueprints are usually illegible.
- Make a thick-line tracing of essentials. For example, re-create a simpler version of the original.

Graphs

- Effective graphs will clarify your findings at a glance.
- Poor graphs will leave your audience confused.
- Limit the amount of information in each graph.
- Decide what type of graph is best for the type of data presented.

Types of Graphs

- **Flow Charts:** Summarize how several variables interact. Good in the methods section.
- **Schematic Diagrams:** Good for showing pieces of equipment.
- **Bar Graphs:** Compare 2 or 3 subjects for 2 or 3 variables. Stacked bar-graphs are good for expressing proportions of a whole.

- Line Graphs: Display change over time. Three lines of data is the limit for one graph. Colors are easier to follow than different line types.
- Pie Charts: Present proportions of the whole. Using two together allow comparison similar to stacked bar graphs. Better for more than 2 series than stacked bar graphs. Present no more than 2 per slide.

Preparation Questions

- What is my topic?
- What day and time am I speaking?
- Where and in what room am I speaking?
- Who is my Session chair?
- How and when will I load my presentation on presentation computer?
- What are the size and layout of the presentation room?
- How long will I have to talk?
- How much time for questions?
- Will there be other talks on similar or related subjects?
- At what point in the program will your talk be given?

Define your Central Message

- The best presentations make just one point, loudly and clearly.
- Do your best to develop a summary of your work that you can state in 25 words or less, using plain English.

Organize your Presentation

- Use introduction, methods, results, discussion, conclusions, and significance segments. Only need outline if you are not using this organization for your presentation.
- Consider the central message in every presentation segment.
- Indicate why anyone should care about your results.
- Use words that are simple, direct, and active.
- The primary purpose for giving the scientific talk is to inform or instruct.
- The topic should be defined within the context of the rest of the program and within your invitation to speak.
- The depth and scope of the content is determined by the audience profile and the time given for you to speak.

Clarify Your Presentation

- Keep the non-technical language as straightforward and uncomplicated as possible.
- Simplify your phrases.
- Tighten your sentences.
- Never use a long word when a short one will do.
- If you can delete a word without losing meaning, delete it.
- Use equations, math, and symbols sparingly and carefully.
- Scientific talks contain many facts and data, so it is important to summarize. Summaries can be done as you progress or at the end. Visual summaries are particularly effective.

Generating Excitement and Interest

- Why would other scientists be interested?

- Think about how to generate excitement for the subject in someone without knowledge and involvement?
- How might other disciplines or other research areas within my own discipline use this information?
- Is there a research or teaching anecdotes that can add emphasis, interest or humor?

Use Your Voice

- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Modulate your voice somewhere between a monotone and sing-song.
- Look up and make eye contact periodically.
- Work hard to eliminate nervous sounds (uh, um). Better to pause and not say anything than to say uh or um.
- Emphasize certain words to get your meaning across.

Style of Delivery

- Write the text in short, uncomplicated sentences.
- Avoid jargon and fancy verbiage. Read verbatim, don't change the wording.
- Additionally, you **MUST** walk your audience through the graphs in the Results section.
- Tell them the important points.
- Let the slides cue your speech. You must really know your material well.
- You will almost have memorized your slide order. Be careful about exceeding your time frame

Adhere to the Time Frame

- Don't make your session moderator take "police action"!
- To assure success in this area...practice, practice, practice.

Practice, Practice, and more Practice

- Rehearse with accessories including microphone, pointer, and screen.
- Try it out on your peers, family, pets, in the mirror, or videotape.
- Practice early to accommodate revisions.
- If the presentation is too long, cut something out instead of trying to talk faster.
- If possible, practice or test your presentation on the computer system and in the presentation room.
- **To get really good at something, need to put in 10,000 hours of really hard, uncomfortable practice.**

Presentation Skill Evaluation Form

Title: _____

Presenter: _____

Presentation Length* _____

* Grade will be decreased by one letter grade if length is not within 20% of requested length.

Evaluation Scale

- 1 - Strongly Agree
- 2 - Agree
- 3 - Undecided
- 4 - Disagree
- 5 - Strongly Disagree

Evaluation

At the beginning of the presentation, the speaker stated clearly the objectives.	
The speaker provided sufficient and relevant background information.	
The speaker clearly summarized all major points at the end of the presentation.	
The slide content was understandable?	
The slides did not contain too much or too little information.	
Slides material was easily readable.	
The speaker clearly described what was presented in figures before starting to discuss the figure. This included defining the x and y axis parameters.	
Did the speaker appear to understand the content being presented?	
The speaker presented the material in a skillful, logical order.	
The speaker provided skillful transitions between subtopics.	
The speaker presented information at a satisfactory pace.	
The speaker spoke with vocal fluctuations.	
The speaker used body gestures effectively.	