Giving Effective Presentations

An effective presentation is engaging and memorable for the audience. **It involves much more than simply reading slides in front of the room!** Visual aids, communication style, body language, and plenty of preparation work together to bring your topic to life.

The tables below offer advice to help you **prepare**, **design**, **deliver**, and **revise** effective presentations.

PREPARE

STEPS	CONSIDERATIONS
Determine your purpose	What are your reasons for choosing this topic? Do you want to inform, persuade, or entertain? What are your assignment criteria?
Analyze your audience	Why are people coming to your presentation? What aspects of your topic will interest your audience?
Narrow your focus	Given your purpose and audience, what are the essential points you want to cover? What is your unique angle or perspective on this topic?
Consider the context	What relevant information will your audience need in order to understand your points? Is there a storyline that your topic fits within?
Make a plan	If you're presenting as a group, you might also determine who will cover which parts and how much time each person will get during the presentation. Sometimes an outline becomes your first slide or a handout for your classmates.

DESIGN
(especially if you are using **PowerPoint** or any other visual medium)

STEPS	CONSIDERATIONS
Number of slides	Is there a minimum or maximum number of slides you want (especially for each group member in group presentations)?
Types of content	Which of your points is most clearly stated in **words**? (For example, are there specialized terms or section headings that you want to share with the audience?) Which of your points might be most clearly stated in **visuals**, such as tables, graphs, or photos? (For example, are there any points that you can put together in a chart or image to demonstrate how they are related as part of your topic or storyline?)
Display of content	Are the main points clear and simple on each slide? Are the text and visuals large enough for everyone in the audience to see? Does the slide have blank space? Have you used bullet points to highlight information? Have you written direct quotes out fully and included proper citations?
Duration of discussion	How long will you keep each slide up while you discuss the points on it? Some students suggest changing slides every 1.5 to 2 minutes.
Notes	Will you print out the slides to use as notes? Will you write notecards that list the points you want to cover? Will you type notes into the "Notes" box in Power Point to have available on a computer during the presentation?

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DELIVER

STEPS	CONSIDERATIONS
Practice	Can you do one or more full practice presentation for friends or family? Can you ask them for feedback so that you know what you're doing well and what you could improve upon?
Prepare the room	Are you using technology that needs to be turned on and tested before your presentation? Do you want to move seats into a different arrangement for your audience?
Address the audience	Do you keep looking at your notes or the screen or the floor instead of at your audience? Can you find someone in the audience to make eye contact with? If eye contact makes you uncomfortable, can you generally scan the room or look at the audience's t-shirts or foreheads? Aim to directly address the audience at least 50% of the time. More is better.
Speak clearly and slowly	Does your voice reach to all corners of the room? Are you saying each word fully and pausing between slides and between sentences?
Transition smoothly	Do you start the presentation by identifying yourself, your group members, and your topic? Do you change from one point to another or from one presenter to another by giving a brief conclusion for the previous part and a brief introduction for the upcoming part?
End on something strong	Have you concluded with your main points and/or a "take home" message for the audience? Have you mentioned an idea or action that they can follow up on?
Feel confident!	Have you done all you can to prepare for this presentation? If you have, then present with confidence! You know your points better than anyone else in the audience.

REVISE

STEPS	CONSIDERATIONS
Reflect	After your presentation think about your preparation, design, and delivery phases. Take notes on what you observed. If you received feedback on your presentation, take the time to read over those comments and compare them to your notes. Do they line up or are your thoughts different then what other people thought? Focus on both positive and negative aspects of this exercise.
Consider	After reflecting on your presentation, what are some things that worked well during your presentation? Why? What are some things that didn't work so well? Why? What would you change for your next presentation? What will you do the same? How do you think this will affect future presentations?
Address	Actually make the changes to the presentation you just gave and present it to someone. Does it present better? Make a plan to use these same strategies for your next presentation.

Follow these tips and you'll be giving presentations like a pro in no time!