

## Oral Communication

### Organization of Presentation (Team)

1. <https://chipcast.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=d2d08b42-fd3e-473f-810a-a85e0142da65>

A short video lecture made by CMU's own faculty to present the **OABC** framework for organizing presentations. The steps are:

- **Opening** that is engaging, introduces group members, and provides context for the presentation topic.
  - **Agenda** gives a preview of what the presentation will cover, usually as a bullet-point outline slide.
  - **Body** is where the topic is presented in detail, with data and research; if more than one issue is covered, the presentation should be logically organized to **transition** smoothly from one topic to the next.
  - **Conclusion** should summarize what has been covered in the body of the presentation. Here, recommendations can be made based on the information presented.
2. Class presentations are given in front of a well-known audience (classmates and instructor). However, professional presentations will often be given in front of strangers. Students should use a **professional perspective** in class presentations as practice for real-world situations.
    - Imagine that the audience does not know who you are.
    - Introduce yourself. If you are in a team and the first speaker, introduce your teammates as well. Alternatively, all members can introduce themselves, but this must be done.
    - Use a formal, professional tone (e.g., "My name is John Smith" instead of "You all know me, I'm John").

## Presentation Style (Individual)

### Voice

1. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/228515>  
Various advice on how to regulate one's voice during the presentation. If you know you are fast nervous speaker, *slow down*. Adjust the volume of your voice based on the size of the audience (it's better to err slightly on the loud side than the quiet side, though). Make appropriate pauses and change pitch to highlight particularly important messages. This and more on this webpage.
2. <https://www.fastcompany.com/3035634/6-simple-ways-to-improve-the-way-you-speak>  
Similar tips to the ones above, which include slowing down, adjusting pitch, and staying hydrated during the presentation. Your posture has an effect on your voice as well—straightening your back allows you to breathe properly and to project your voice better.
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aM1IRdQUcfo>  
Short video about how to control one's filler words (*uhms* and *ahs*). It explains why we use these filler words and what we can do to reduce frequency of their occurrence. Tips include knowing what you're talking about and using pauses where you would typically use filler words.

### Miscellaneous Style Tips

1. <https://business.ku.edu/professional-attire>  
The University of Kansas Business School provides a description of business professional, smart casual, and business casual attire. It also has a handy video that shows examples of each. CBA students are usually expected to dress *at least* business casual for presentations to meet expectations for appropriate attire.
2. <https://www.lifehack.org/articles/productivity/8-fatal-body-language-mistakes-avoid-during-presentations.html>  
Lifehack.org lists 8 body language mistakes to **avoid** during a presentation. Some of the mistakes listed are keeping your arms crossed, a bad posture, or walking back and forth when not necessary.
3. If you find that you are having trouble making eye contact with your audience, try looking individual audience members between the eyes! This creates an illusion of direct eye contact for the other person, and feels less stressful for the presenter.
4. <https://www.techwell.com/2013/10/give-better-presentation-don-t-read-your-slides>  
Great (short) article about why reading from one's PowerPoint slides is a bad idea. Presenters may be tempted to read from their presentation if their slides have text-heavy information, almost like a script. However, they have to remember that the audience tries to read the presentation while listening to the speaker, and a text heavy slide will bog down the audience that is trying to read it. If you are reading from your slides, you are

not making proper contact or showing expertise in your topic, and you also lose the audience.

5. <https://www.pathologystudent.com/medical-presentation-tip-4-dont-read-off-the-slides/>  
Practice makes perfect! Rehearse your presentation to time yourself, make notes for the points you want to cover, see which points you need to explain in more detail and which sections should be shorter, and practice standing up (because you will be standing during the actual presentation). This website describes the steps for rehearsing and revising your presentation.
6. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/work-in-progress/2014/01/28/five-easy-tricks-to-make-your-presentation-interactive/#a3025c2586c5>  
This Forbes article provides 5 tips for making your presentation interactive to involve the audience and to make the overall presentation more engaging.
  - A particularly good note here concerns **questions** to the audience: as the speaker, keep in mind that it takes time to formulate a decently structured response to a question, and give your audience ample time (5-10 seconds) to come up with opinions or answers after asking a question.
7. <http://www.presentationxpert.com/6-tips-for-presenting-with-a-team-as-a-team>  
Six tips for presenting in a team. Point #5 is particularly important, because many students tend to tune out while one of their teammates is presenting his/her part. Team members should be attentive to their teammates' presentation points, show agreement and react at relevant points of the speech, and be an active listener. Students may also consider using the PEP model in point #2 to keep all members engaged.
8. <http://www.publicwords.com/2010/06/30/10-rules-for-presenting-as-a-team/>  
Collection of tips for both presenting in a team and interacting with the audience to keep the presentation engaging. This page also addresses how to transition smoothly between speakers in the team (hint: it involves rehearsing transitions).

## Use of Visuals (Team)

1. <https://visage.co/11-design-tips-beautiful-presentations/>

The majority of points made on this webpage are useful. Some exceptions:

- It is still relevant to use **bullet points**. Text presented in bullet-points separates messages into neat chunks of important information, whereas a paragraph of text would be unreadable.
- You can use PowerPoint and Prezi **templates**, as long as their style suits the topic and purpose of your presentation. That is, don't use a template with a school theme (e.g., red apple and notebook in the background) if you are presenting a business plan, don't use a floral theme when presenting a serious issue, etc.
- You can use **transition** animations, as long as they are quick and not silly (avoid having new text bounce onto the screen, instead opt for the "Fade in" transition option and shorten the animation time to .25s instead of .50s).

2. <https://www.universalclass.com/articles/business/using-visual-aids-in-effective-presentations.htm>

This website discusses the Dos and Don'ts of visual aid use, including proper font size and use of colors. It also provides criteria for choosing relevant visual aids.

3. <http://www.ncsl.org/legislators-staff/legislative-staff/legislative-staff-coordinating-committee/tips-for-making-effective-powerpoint-presentations.aspx>

Provides a comprehensive list of short and succinct tips for making effective PowerPoint visuals, separately for text, color and graphics. Tips include:

- Use font size no smaller than 24 point
- Avoid long sentences
- Use a 6x6 rule for bullet point slides
- Use contrasting text and background, with dark text on light background
- Know your audience
- Check spelling and grammar
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4. Consider using the client company's logo and/or color scheme for PowerPoint presentation. College students should use CMU logo or that of any brands involved in presenting the solution. Use of a brand will boost the recognizability of the product. A presentation that is representative of its employer or creators seems more credible and will be more readily accepted by the parties impacted by the change.