Tips for Giving an Oral Presentation

A SUMMARY OF IMPORTANT ELEMENTS FOR MAKING A GREAT PRESENTATION

Presentation Preparation

Presentations will adhere to the 15 minute allotted time with 12 minutes for the presentation and 3 minutes for Q&A. All talks need to be loaded the day before the allocated time. Please bring your presentation on a USB drive or equivalent.

Plan for a 12 minute talk with 3 minutes for questions: You have a total of 15 minutes in front of your audience and you don't want to be cut off by the moderator. Do a timed run-through of your talk to make sure it is the proper length with enough time left over for questions. Adjust your content accordingly.

Select key points from each section of your paper: Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion, and Conclusions. You will not have time to present everything, so think carefully about what you want your audience to learn from your talk. Prepare your first and last sentences and then decide how to connect them.

Prepare an outline of your talk so that you can clearly see logical order in your presentation. Select visual aids to go with your outline and key points. For graphs, make sure to label the axes and point these out to your audience.

Font sizes should be 20 to 24 point, with a minimum of 18 point so that people in the back of the room can read all numbers and text.

Check grammar and spelling on all slides.

Make eye contact with your audience. They want to learn from your talk and be as interested in the topic as you are.

Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

DO NOT read your talk. Talk to your audience. If you have notes, glance at them but *do not read* them to the audience.

DO NOT look at the projection screen behind you. Glance at your slides on the computer in front to prompt you through your presentation. Make sure that you look at the audience.

AVOID excessive text. Some of your points, such as Methods and Conclusions, may be best conveyed with text rather than photos or graphs, but keep it short and concise. Bullet points are best. Your audience should be able to read the text without your help.

AVOID cluttered tables that are unreadable. If your audience can't read the table, it is not a visual aid. Consider putting the same information into a simple graph.

AVOID having too many slides that cause you to exceed your time limit or move too rapidly through your presentation. As a general rule, plan on only one or two slides per minute of presentation.

AVOID using too many colors that distract the audience from your message. Keep in mind that some people are red-green colorblind. Yellow is hard to see on a light background.

For More Tips

Download the "Scientifically Speaking" guidebook posted on the 13th ICOC website