

## PRESENTING YOUR PROJECT

Most good writing, we are told over and over again, must have structure. A good speech is no exception. By providing your speech with a beginning, middle and an end, you will have laid the foundations for a successful presentation.

### The Beginning

The first thirty seconds of your presentation are probably the most important. In that period of time you must grab the attention of the audience, and engage their interest in what you have to say.

This can be achieved in several ways. For example you could raise a thought provoking question, make an interesting or controversial statement, recite a relevant quotation or even recount a joke.

Once you have won the attention of the audience, your presentation should move seamlessly to the middle of your talk.

**To help your audience focus clearly on your presentation, a useful guide is:**

- 1. In your introduction, tell your audience what you are going to talk about.**
- 2. Deliver the body of your talk.**
- 3. In your conclusion, tell your audience the main points of the talk you have just given.**

### The Body

The body of your talk will always be the largest part. At this point your audience will have been introduced to you and the subject of your speech (as set out in the beginning) and will hopefully be ready to hear your points on the subject.

The best way to set out the body of your presentation is by formulating a series of points that you would like to raise.

The points should be organised so that related issues follow one another so that each point builds upon the previous one. This will also give your talk a more logical progression, and make the job of the listener a far easier one.

Don't try to overwhelm your audience with countless points. It is better to have fewer points that you make well than to have too many points, none of which are made satisfactorily.



**The closing**

Like your opening, the closing of your talk must contain some of your strongest materials.

You should view the closing of your presentation as an opportunity to:

- Summarise the main points of your talk
- Provide some further food for thought
- Distribute any handouts
- Ask for questions

Many people think that the art of giving presentations is to talk non-stop but giving a good presentation does not mean giving as much information as possible.

Allow yourself to pause briefly here and there, for example when you move onto a different stage of your presentation. This will not only help you collect your thoughts; it will also help your audience to think about what you have said.

**Reading from a script**

Reading your entire talk from a script may give you confidence and ensure that nothing is forgotten or omitted, however it is the least desirable option for delivering a talk.

You will find it more difficult to see your audience, and make it harder for them to get involved. When reading from a script it is extremely difficult to deliver your presentation with any amount of passion or enthusiasm.

**Using notes**

If you are not confident enough to recite your talk from memory, then the use of notes is a much more desirable option. Your notes should consist of the keywords or points of your speech – a skeleton of thoughts or words around which you can build your talk. You may refer to your notes occasionally to maintain the thread of your speech, while for the most part you will be able to talk directly to your audience.

**Reciting from memory**

You may prefer to recite from memory. However you should only do this if you are comfortable speaking publicly, and not prone to loss of concentration (or memory!). As with reading from a script, you should be careful not to lapse into monotonous recitations of your speech.

### **Presentation delivery tips**

- The more you look at the audience, the easier it is to monitor their reactions, so you should always be on the lookout for positive and negative signs
- The more you look at the audience, the greater the pressure on them to pay attention
- Speak clearly, and adjust your voice so that everyone can hear you
- It is common to speak quickly when nervous, try to take your time
- Effectively used, a pause can be used to emphasise a point
- Try to use your hand gestures effectively, do not fidget or make nervous gestures with your hands. Do not keep your hands in your pockets
- Be yourself; allow your own personality to come across

### **VISUAL AIDS/HANDOUTS**

Any visual aids or handouts used should supplement the information you are presenting. They should enhance the learning experience, adding a learning style that appeals to a wider audience. Photographs, colourful charts which explain the information in another format are useful. DVD clips can be used to further explain or explore a comment or show a realistic example of the message you are trying to put over.

### **INVOLVING THE AUDIENCE**

Some people learn better from experience. Involving the audience in an activity related to the subject, in a role play, using a participative method can all enhance their understanding of the subject matter. Using activities requires a bit of caution when deciding what to use, consider the space available, the relevancy of the activity to the presentation, resources you may need, additional preparation required, physical abilities of the participants involved, literacy, language barriers etc.

