

### **1. What is a presentation?**

A presentation is a formal method of communication where information, ideas, or opinions are conveyed to an audience. Presentations typically involve a speaker or group of speakers who deliver content to an audience using various mediums such as spoken word, visual aids (such as slides or charts), and sometimes interactive elements. The purpose of a presentation can vary widely, including informing, persuading, teaching, or entertaining the audience on a particular topic or subject matter. Presentations are commonly used in educational settings, business meetings, conferences, seminars, and public events. They often include elements such as introductions, main content or arguments, conclusions, and opportunities for audience engagement through questions or discussion.

### **2. What is the purpose of presentations?**

Students are often asked to give presentations, either alone or in groups, in order to:

- provide a focus for class discussion.
- enable different groups to explore various aspects of a topic or course material in detail.
- share the results of group projects.
- gain practice in speaking in front of others, particularly useful for viva exams, job interviews, workplace presentations, and life generally.

### **3. Common presentation pitfalls and mistakes**

The most common mistakes that presenters often make are as follows:

- Flying through the content at top speed.
- Not having an introduction or a conclusion.
- Not providing time for questions and answers.
- Reading from a prepared text.
- Being overreliant on PowerPoint.
- Being afraid to go into too much detail.
- Worrying too much about ambiguous signals from your audience.

## **Types of presentations:**

- **Informative**

Some presentation assignments will ask the presenter simply to deliver information about a topic. Often these presentations involve research, which the presenter will shape and present to the instructor and classmates. Typically, informative presentations ask that you NOT share your opinion about the subject at hand (which can be more challenging than it seems). With an informative presentation, your goal is to educate your audience by presenting a summary of your research and sticking to the facts only.

- **Persuasive**

Unlike informative presentations, persuasive presentations ask that you not only form an opinion about your subject, but also convince your audience to come around to your point of view. These presentations often involve research, too, and the findings of your research will be used to bolster the persuasive case you are making.

- **Lesson Delivery**

As a presenter, you may be asked to do a “Teaching Presentation,” which will require you to specialize in one topic of the course and give your fellow classmates instruction about it. In short, you become the teacher of a subject. Often your presentation will be the only time that this subject is covered in the class, so you will be responsible for making sure that you provide clear, detailed, and relevant information about it. You may also be asked to provide questions on the subject to be included in a quiz or test.

- **Poster**

Poster presentations should convey all the information on a subject necessary for viewers to consider on their own. They often consist of short, punchy wording accompanied by strong visuals—graphs, charts, images, and/or illustrations. Posters frequently require research to prepare, and they allow for some creativity in design. Your poster has to communicate everything that is important without you being there to explain it to your audience.

- **Interactive Presentations**

Interactive presentations engage the audience in active participation, such as through discussions, group activities, or hands-on exercises. They promote collaboration and enhance learning through engagement.

- **Creative Presentations**

Creative presentations involve using innovative approaches to convey information or ideas. They may include storytelling, multimedia elements, role-playing, or artistic components to captivate the audience's interest.

- **Project Presentations**

Project presentations involve sharing the progress, outcomes, or results of a specific project undertaken by individuals or groups. They may include project reports, presentations of findings, and reflections on the project process.

- **Review Presentations**

Review presentations summarize and consolidate information from previous lessons, readings, or discussions. They help reinforce learning and provide opportunities for reflection on key concepts.

#### **4. What makes a great presentation?**

##### **4.1. Strong content**

The knowledge base is relevant, accurate, pitched at the right level for the course and the audience.

##### **4.2. Direction**

The talk leads the audience towards a point, such as to understand the reasons behind your position, conclusions or recommendations.

##### **4.3. Clarity**

The audience can follow the argument easily because of the way it is organised and presented: well structured, logically sequenced. Its key points stand out.

##### **4.4. Persuasiveness**

It provides a strong case.

##### **4.5. Points of interest**

This could be a topical issue, a compelling argument, new data, visual material, good examples to illustrate the points.

#### **4.6. Well-paced**

It moves at a speed that maintains attention, neither tediously slow nor gabbled. The speaker doesn't 'go faster' in order to cover more material than there is time for.

#### **4.7. Selective**

What is omitted can be as important as what is included, for clarity, relevance and pacing.

#### **4.8. Researched**

Your advance research should be evident in the talk and also in the way you answer reasonable questions put to you by the audience: you should know your material well.

#### **4.9. Enjoyable**

Aim to help the audience enjoy the talk through the content and style of presentation. It helps if you are confident and enjoy what you are saying (or appear to be). A little humour can help (but is not essential so don't force it).

#### **4.10. Audience awareness**

This needs to be evident from the way the talk is both designed, prepared and presented.

#### **4.11. Technical proficiency**

Materials and slides are ready. You can use the technology fluidly.

#### **4.12. Preparation and practice**

Presenters put time into thinking through exactly how it will work, and practise until they are confident everything will work and fit into the time available.