

PAPER PRESENTATION PLAN

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Successful presentations depend on good preparation. Think about the purpose of your presentation and the audience. If you are presenting as part of an assessment, check your brief, marking criteria and guidance carefully.

Create a planning schedule

It might help to create a planning schedule. Write out a list of all the tasks you need to do and how much time to allocate to each task.

For example, if your presentation is for an assessment you could break down your preparation into the following tasks:

1. Interpret and understand the assessment brief. For more guidance see our Interpreting your assignment activity.
2. Think about who your audience is.
3. Research your topic. Go to our guidance on searching for information
4. Identify your key message.
5. Plan your content and produce an outline.
6. Write your presentation and prepare your visual aids.
7. Practise your presentation.

This Assignment Survival Kit from the University of Kent can help you to plan a schedule.

Know your audience

Make sure you understand why you are giving this talk, and to whom.

Ask yourself:

- How much does the audience already know? This may change how much background detail you will need to include or whether you use subject-specific terminology.
- Who is your audience? Are they fellow students, academics, school children? This will help you decide the level to pitch it at and the type of content you will include.
- What is the cultural background of the audience? This may alter your use of specific cultural references, idioms or slang terms.
- What will they be interested in? You need to be selective about the key points and information you include.

You might not be able to answer all these questions for everyone who will attend, but you can consider a general impression of their needs and expectations.

Plan your content

Set aside plenty of time to plan what you are going to say. You need to be selective. It is better to discuss fewer points in detail than many points superficially. You should:

- decide what your key message or argument is

- create an outline of your presentation by identifying the most relevant points that contribute to your overall message or argument
- decide what supporting evidence to include that will help your audience to understand and be persuaded by what you are saying
- consider what visual aids will help to illustrate, illuminate or explain what you are saying such as images, diagrams, statistics or even video clips.

Like many other assignments, a presentation should include:

- an introduction that explains what you are going to talk about. Usually you should present your key message, or argument and an outline of the presentation
- a main body where you discuss the most relevant and interesting points in a logical and coherent order
- a conclusion that gives a brief review of the purpose of your presentation, reiterates the key message and if possible sets your discussion in a wider context
- references to the evidence you have used. This may be verbal or should be on the slides if you are using them
- thanking the audience for listening and an invitation to ask questions.

During your presentation, help your audience follow your thoughts and understand how your ideas link together by giving them verbal cues.

Here are some examples:

- “I will begin by discussing...”
- “We will draw on 2 key theories...”
- “Now I have discussed the methods, I will move on to...”

- “In contrast to my earlier argument...”
- “This is particularly significant because...”
- “In this presentation I aimed to...”

Check the venue

Finally, you should also take time to check the venue. You will need to know what resources are available to you so you can plan what to bring and how long it will take to set up.

If the venue is local, set aside an hour to visit the room. Check the seating arrangements, IT/projection facilities, plug sockets, and whether there are any flip-charts or whiteboards for feedback.

If you are presenting at a distant location, contact someone there to ask questions.