

10-minute presentation

ASSIGNMENT:

10-minute oral presentation explaining research conclusions and essential evidence.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION AND GRADE:

- clarity (and early statement) of topic and thesis
- relevance, usefulness, and clarity of arguments and evidence
- organization and focus
- introduction (appealing, clear, useful set-up)
- conclusion (obvious but not a cliché; useful)
- accuracy
- delivery (posture, location, gestures, dress, mannerisms, eye contact, handling of notes)
- adherence to 10-minute limit (*Limited time during the final exam period requires that speakers be cut off if they run long*)
- use of power point (and other visual aids)
- notes (*key words and phrases; *turned in after talk)

GOAL:

To present (as well as the time limit permits) your research paper's thesis, major arguments, and evidence. (*Obviously, you CANNOT discuss everything that your paper covers, so think through your thesis and evidence and adjust them accordingly.*)

INTRODUCTION:

State in obvious, explicit terms what your talk is about – your **topic**. Also, provide the talk’s **thesis** about this topic. Don’t shortchange or rush through your thesis.

Listeners should not have to listen to 4-5 minutes of facts before finding out what those details are supposed to add up to.

In addition, state in obvious, explicit terms how your talk is **organized**.

Make your introduction as attention-grabbing—and clear—as possible and appropriate.

BODY:

Supporting arguments and evidence for the thesis presented in the introduction must be clearly and explicitly organized and explained. Do not rely on a “stream of consciousness” drifting from one point to another.

Remember that your listeners cannot “reread” your talk in order to understand parts that you do not make clear, that are totally new to them, or that you cover too quickly. They are totally or generally unfamiliar with your topic and—certainly—your thesis about it.

Make your spoken words as useful as possible by making them as easy to follow as possible. For example, as you reach each new part of your talk’s body, make that obvious to your audience with some sort of “signpost.”

You have limited time, so be careful how much time you devote to background and explanations. On the other hand, too little explanation could well make your overall point unclear.

Think through the *essentials* and what *must* be said. Stand back and see the bigger picture. Do not attempt to include everything that your research uncovered, that you covered in your paper, or that you **want** to say.

WARNING: What you did to clarify your ideas in your *paper* may not work in an *oral presentation*.

And do not speak quickly just so you can cover more. Your ability to make your audience *understand* will be affected. **Your goal is to COMMUNICATE.**

CONCLUSION:

Do not just stop or say, “Well, I guess that’s it” or “I’m finished.” Your conclusion should help your listeners tie together your entire talk, linking arguments and evidence with thesis.

Consider making the introduction and conclusion “bookends” with each emphasizing the same story or person or question or quotation.

DELIVERY:

■ Do NOT read your report.

Prepare brief notes (key words and phrases) that keep you organized and that can quickly refresh your memory if you need help.

Reading talk? Penalty: up to 30 points.

Word-for word or full phrase/sentence “notes”? Penalty: up to 30 points.

Consider what will work best for you (note cards, full or half sheets of typing paper) and what you can use without distracting your audience.

TIP: Do not write on back of notes or staple pages together.

Make sure type is large and dark for quick reference.

An outline structure and “white space” make points jump out.

Consider where notes will be during your talk.

Failure to turn in notes *immediately* after talk? Penalty: 10 points.

- Use power point (with outline, key words/names/dates/ \titles, map, timeline, video, music, etc.) to provide your audience with visual reinforcement and clarification of your spoken words. Such aids help with background and with complex arguments or with lists of people, events, and dates.

Limit the number of slides.

Create a talk that uses power point as a supplement—*not* a power-point presentation.

Aids that work for your audience’s better understanding can also work to take focus off of you and to give you additional “notes.” They also can give you a way of releasing tension and avoiding appearing stiff, e.g., by moving to point out images on the screen.

Make all visual aids CLEAR and SIMPLE. Make sure that writing and symbols are large enough for everyone to see without straining and that you stand where you do not block your audience's view. (Again, move around to help focus your audience.)

When the visual aid is useful to your explanation, tell the audience. Do not assume that the audience knows when to listen to you and when to look at the screen.

Do not turn your back to the audience.

PRACTICE SESSIONS:

Practice often so that you are comfortable with every part of your talk. Being comfortable does not mean memorization (your audience wants you to talk *to* them, not *at* them), but it does require the **confidence** that comes from sufficient practice.

Your classroom is available throughout the weekend and off and on throughout the week. Use it (and the “clicker”) for at least one practice session.

You **MUST** practice your presentation with a student or students from your section of HIST 297.

Failure to do so? 10-point penalty.

10-MINUTE TIME LIMIT:

While there is no problem with running a bit over or under ten minutes, much shorter talks will not do what the assignment requires (or they will be so fast that your audience misses many of

your points); much longer ones will prove that you did not invest sufficient time and effort into designing and fine-tuning your talk.

You will be signaled if you reach 10 ½ minutes so that you know that you need to draw your talk to a close.

NOTE: If you run more than one minute over, you will be stopped.

DRESS:

Your oral presentation is a formal class requirement, and it is the “high point” of HIST 297. Plus, your appearance has much to do with your confidence and with your audience’s response.

Be comfortable, but dress within an appropriate range.

Not appropriate includes untucked-in shirts, wrinkled or revealing (e.g., low-cut, overly short, or tight) clothing, and attire (including shoes) that suggests outdoor activities. Clothing does not have to be “formal.” but it must be suitable for a “professional” event.

FEEDBACK:

Two or three class members will evaluate each presentation. One of these evaluators will be a “practice partner.”