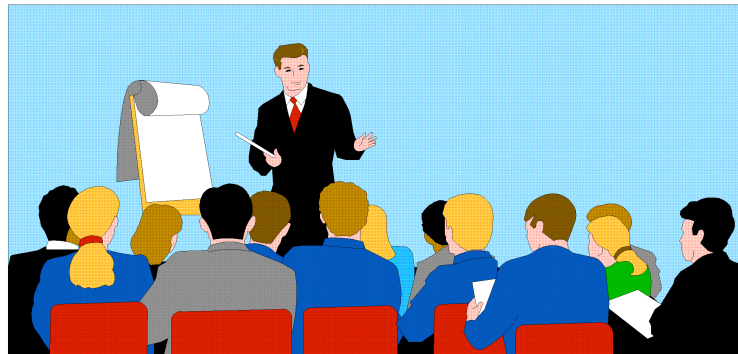


How to Give a *Dynamic* Presentation



Part I: Dealing With Anxiety

Your teacher has asked you to give an oral presentation in front of your peers. Just thinking about the upcoming presentation gives you major butterflies! Finally, the day has arrived. The palms of your hands become increasingly damp and you begin to feel almost dizzy with anxiety. When your name is called to present, you fear that you might forget what to say or worse yet, start shaking in front of the class!

Yikes!

Do you know what the number 1 phobia in the U.S.? Public Speaking

The number 3 fear in the U.S. is cancer.

As you can see, public speaking is a common phobia. Here are some tips that will help you reduce speaker's anxiety.

1) ORGANIZE

Lack of organization is one of the major causes of anxiety. Knowing that your thoughts are well organized will give you more confidence.

2) VISUALIZE

Imagine walking into a room. Your teacher announces your name. You deliver your presentation with enthusiasm and answer questions with confidence. As you go back to your seat, you know you did a great job.

Mentally rehearse this sequence with all the details—what the mind's eye sees, the body will repeat. Athletes use visualization before competitive events. It is a powerful tool. If you "download" optimistic, positive thoughts about situations, the output will be positive.

3) PRACTICE

Rehearse (using poster, PowerPoint, etc.) until you feel the rhythm of your presentation. Practice promotes confidence. Even if you should go into your “anxiety mode” when you step in front of the class, rehearsal enables you to go through the motions since they are mentally engrained.

4) BREATHE

Often, when we are anxious, muscles tighten including the diaphragm and intercostals. This means that we may not be breathing deeply enough. This is one of the reasons that people feel dizzy or light-headed during public speaking—they are not moving enough oxygenated blood to the brain. Before you take the spotlight, sit erect and do some slow diaphragmatic breathing exercises.

5) RELEASE MUSCLE TENSION

As tension increases and muscles tighten the persistent contraction fatigues muscles and often cause hands and legs to shake. To avoid shaking, practice deep-muscle relaxation by tensing and relaxing muscles from head to toe.

6) MOVE

If you find that you stand in one place during a presentation and lock your arm and legs in one spot, chances are greater that you will experience a greater build-up of tension. Move around some and gesture (as you would during a conversation), you will release pent-up energy and deflate some of your anxiety. Movement also helps keep the listener's attention. Do not pace rapidly and gesticulate wildly! This is very distracting. Movements should be conservative.

6) EYE CONTACT

A good speaker should try and make his/her presentation similar to a one-on-one conversation. As you speak, scan the audience and make eye contact with various individuals. This helps to connect the listeners to the speaker.

Part II: Personal Appearance

This section is not intended to provide specific fashion guidelines but rather some general considerations on your dress and appearance. In general, avoid excess. Keep patterns, accessories and colors simple. You should be the focus, not your clothes and accessories.

Girls:

- 1) Clothes should fit well, NOT TOO TIGHT. Watch your hemline if you are presenting on a stage! In general, a few inches above the knee is acceptable. Slits that show the thigh are distracting and tend to draw the listener's attention to your leg and not the material being presented.
- 1) Find 2-3 colors that work well with your complexion and hair—solids are best. Make sure that your fabric doesn't wrinkle too easily and that it doesn't make noise when you move. Sleeveless garments are not considered professional unless you are wearing a jacket over the garment. Ladies suit jackets are usually left unbuttoned since they are often form fitting and don't allow as much necessary arm movement for demonstrations.
- 2) Do not accessorize too much with jewelry (especially with bracelets that jangle). Simplicity is always best.

- 3) Shoes should always be closed-toe and of moderate height. Leave your high, spiky heels for other events. Remember, public speaking increases anxiety and high heels could increase your chances of stumbling or tripping in front of your audience. How embarrassing would that be, ladies!?! Dark, solid color shoes are always business friendly.
- 4) Makeup is a nice addition as long as it is kept simple. Overdone eyes (metallic shadow, thick eyeliner, etc.), heavily rouged cheeks, and dark lipstick draws the listener's attention to your face and not the message you are delivering. Stay away from trendy cosmetic colors (i.e. dark berry lip liners, citrus-colored nail polishes)
- 5) In the business world, fingernails should be a moderate length (just above the fleshy tip of fingers). Air-painted, rhinestone studded nails are not appropriate.
- 6) Hair should be away from your face. No asymmetrical styles, please.

Boys:

- 1) Generally, dark blues, grays and blacks are good colors for slacks. Make sure slacks are belted and not too short.
- 2) If you are obliged to wear a suit or sport coat, select a classic style that is not brightly colored or checkered. When men are standing, coats are designed to be buttoned (less informal and holds shape of jacket better). When you return to your seat, you may unbutton the jacket so that it doesn't bunch.
- 3) Shirts should be light colored. If you are worried about perspiration showing, wear a cotton T-shirt and a white shirt. (If going on to be videoed, avoid white shirts in favor a light gray.)
- 4) Select a tie that is not too busy and demanding of attention.
- 5) Make sure that socks coordinate with slacks and match. Socks should cover any bare leg when you are sitting.
- 6) Hair should be neat and clean.

A word about glasses for both sexes . . .

A general rule for presenters is to wear glasses if you need them to see the audience or read visuals. If you don't need them for distance vision, or can wear contacts and/or leave the glasses off. It's best to avoid glasses if possible since glass reflects light and the audience may not be able to see your eyes. If your glasses have the anti-reflective coating, there's no need to worry about reflection and glare.

Part III: Directing Your Audience's Focus**Five good tips when you need to redirect the audience's focus:**

- 1) If you're giving a PPT presentation and know that you need to give an explanation at specific points, you may insert a blank slide at those points to redirect attention to you.

- 2) Show or demonstrate an object by revealing it when referred to and then covering it up when it is no longer in use. (If object is not covered, most people will continue looking out of curiosity and may miss some of the presentation.)
- 3) Avoid passing objects around audience since this is very distracting and takes attention away from presenter. Instead, walk into the audience and show object to everyone briefly and then, make it available at the end of the session.

Good places for the presenter to stand:

- The presenter may stand in front at center when using a flip chart or poster.
- The presenter should stand to the audiences' left when using PowerPoint presentation. This way, the speaker does not block the view of the audience. During the presentation, the speaker can step up to the presentation screen and use his/her hand to point to an area of interest on the slide. The audiences' attention is easily directed to words on the slide since we read from left to right.

Tips on using a laser pointer:

- 1) When using a laser pointer, keep your body to the audience and use the pointer in the hand that is closest to the visual. This keeps you connected with the audience and prevents your arm from crossing the body.
- 2) When using a laser pointer don't try to point with it—rather circle the part of the slide you want the audience to focus on. Everyone has slight muscular tremors due to normal muscle contraction and pointing with a laser exaggerates your inability to hold pointer in a fixed position (particularly the farther you are from visual, the more obvious the shake).
- 3) Don't be a "quick-draw" pointer with the laser because the audience might not see where you were pointing.
- 4) Don't play with the pointer while using it. You don't want to accidentally sweep the laser light across your audience's eyes.
- 5) Use your laser pointer sparingly. It begins to look like Tinkerbell flitting across your slides after a while.