



Conversation Partners: Presentation Skills and Academic Conversation

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How to Use this Guide

This guide was created specifically for those students who come to Conversation Partners seeking assistance with presentations and/or public speaking skills. Please contact Elisabeth Ursell at eursell@temple.edu if a student needs more detailed materials for a specific course. Feel free to distribute this guide directly to students.

Part 1: Presentation Skills

Presentation Organization:

Do not write everything you are going to say on your Powerpoint. Generally, it is better to only write key concepts or phrases to keep most of the attention focused on what you are saying.

Citations: If you borrowed an image or phrase from another work, use the same citation rules as in writing. Some people choose to put citations as a footnote on the slide. Including a references section at the end of the Powerpoint is usually expected.

Have a main argument or thesis statement. You still need to have a central argument to your presentation. Even though it isn't a paper, many of the same rules apply!

Presentation Breakdown:

- Welcome your audience
- Introduce your topic (with a title!)
- Start general, then get specific
- Always share methods of data collection first, results second

Timing

Even if you practice your presentation many times, it is possible that one of the following might still happen to you:

Too much time: If you are about to finish your presentation and have lots of extra time left, try the following:

- ✚ Slow down. Speak slower if you are speaking too fast.
- ✚ Have “back ups” ready. These are slides or discussion points with further details on your project that you can use only if you have extra time. You could put them at the end of the presentation or write them on a flashcard.

Too little time: If you are going through your presentation too slowly and need to finish it in a short time, try the following:

- ✚ Before your presentation, think of a summary of each slide that you can say in one sentence. Have these summaries ready in case you need to shorten the presentation.

Powerpoint also has the option of using a timer that automatically changes each slide at a certain time. This might be a good way to practice how long it takes you to talk about each slide.

Body Language

- ✚ Check the **audience's comprehension and engagement** throughout the presentation.
 - Ask questions to see if the audience is listening
- ✚ Pause at certain points (especially if it is a long presentation) to gauge the audience's reaction. Do people look bored? If so, it might be time to ask a question to the audience, such as:
 - Based on what I've said so far, what do you think about _____?

Comprehension check questions:

- ✚ Is everyone with me so far?
- ✚ Does anyone have a question about _____?

Eye contact and movement

Look at the audience. Make sure your eyes travel across the audience. Do not stare at the back wall or focus on a single person.

Talk with your hands (in moderation). Most Americans like to use their hands to express ideas while talking. That is not to say that we make complex movements, but we might do some of the following:

Open palms (when explaining an idea)

hand on heart (shows sincerity)



Clasped Hand (to make a specific point or talk about a detail)



Do not clench your hands, hold them rigidly at your sides, or cross your arms. These mannerisms are usually seen as defensive. Do not slouch or lean on the wall or podium. This shows that you might not really care about your presentation.

You can move around the room to see your audience better, but avoid quick, distracting movements. Tapping your foot or pacing indicates you are nervous.

If you must use flashcards, keep them as subtle as possible. Do not pause to read or shuffle through them during your presentation.

Transitional Phrases

Starting the Presentation

First, I'd like to discuss...

To start, I'd like to talk about...

My topic is about....

Stating a Main Argument:

Therefore, I propose...

I suggest...

Data Interpretation:

This data reveals that...

If you look at this part of the chart here, you can see an increase/decrease in....

Introducing an Opposing viewpoint:

However,

Despite this...

Other research supports...

Other researchers believe...

Conclusions:

So...

As a result...

Based on these findings...

Due to this issue...

Although the results are inconclusive, one solution is to...

Visuals

Image Placement

Images must be:

- Centered
- In focus
- Clear purpose
- Used in moderation
- Professional looking (generally, avoid cartoons or drawings for professional or academic topics)
- Balanced or Neutral Background and Font Colors

Sites where you can find professional looking stock photos:

Gettyimages.com (create a free account and search for “royalty free” images)

Stockfreeimages.com (create a free account and search for “free stock” images)

Text

Use keywords rather than whole sentences or paragraphs

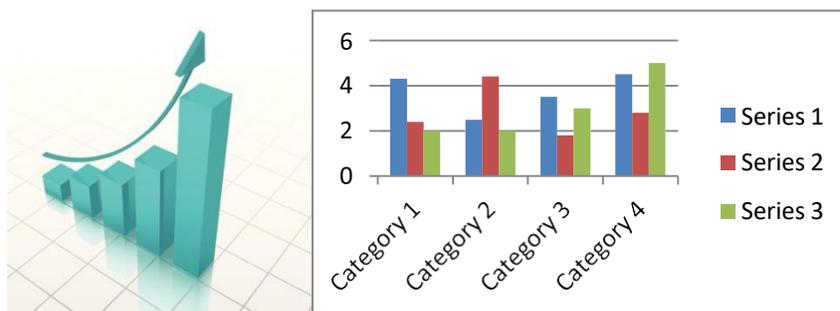
Don't use bullet points in every slide. Vary the layout of your slides to keep your audience engaged.

Charts and Graphs

Try to use only one or two charts or graphs per slide.

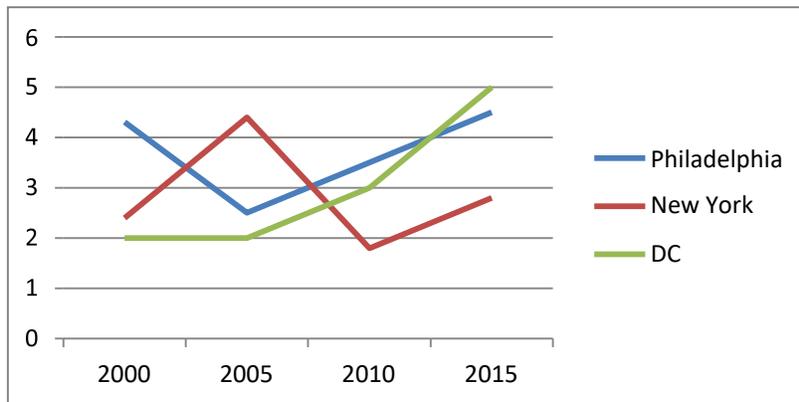
Avoid 3-D effects in charts. If you are using a bar graph, make sure that the bars are close enough together to see the trend.

The chart on the right is easier to read:

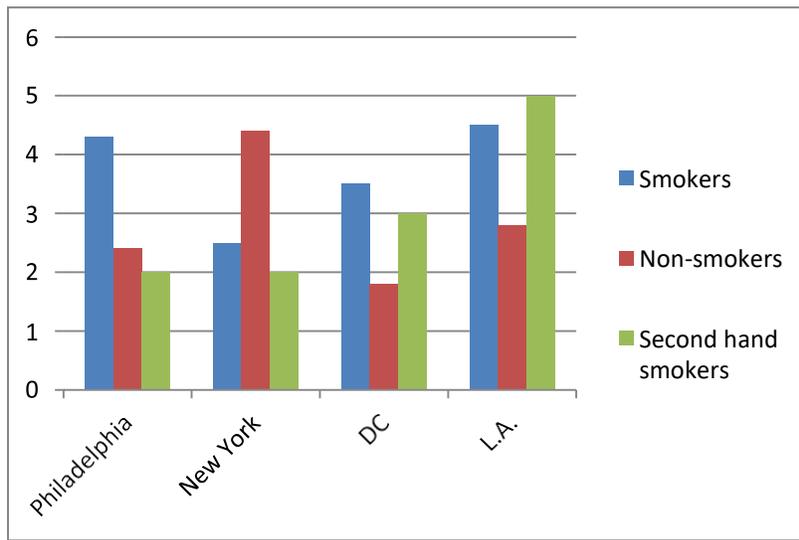


Examples (please note that all examples are fictional and don't use real data)

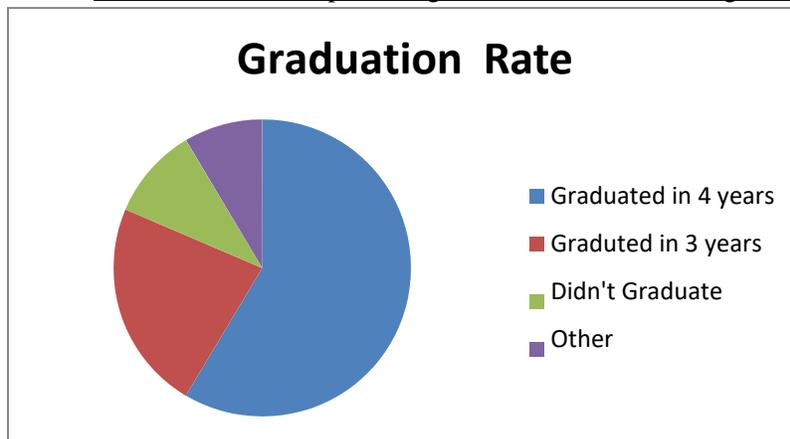
Line graphs are used to show changes over time



Bar graphs are used to show comparisons between variables



Pie charts show how different percentages add to a whole and logical total



Tables are best when you have too much data to fit in a graph

Student Age	Number of visits	Average length of visits	SAT Test Score
17	4	46.7 minutes	1850
23	2	32.5 minutes	2260

Audience and Location

When you're writing a paper, you must always think of who your target audience might be. The same is true for a presentation.

Use visuals and materials that your audience can relate to.

Is your audience old? Young? Faculty? Staff? Think very carefully about who might be in the room and what their expectations might be based off their own needs and interests.

Will you be able to set up your PowerPoint or other presentation materials quickly and easily?

What will you have access to? Where can you stand in the room to best be seen by everyone?

Save backups of Powerpoint files. It generally looks unprofessional to go into your email account on a public screen and open your Powerpoint in front of your audience. If you can, open it beforehand.

Part II-Academic Conversation: The Basics

Basic Principles of Academic Conversation:

- Elaborate and clarify
- Support ideas with examples
- Build on and/or challenge a partner's idea
- Paraphrase
- Synthesize Conversation points

Source: Zwiers and Crawford(2011). *Academic conversations: Classroom talk that fosters critical thinking and content understandings*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.

How to politely request clarification:

- *Can you clarify that?*
- *Can you elaborate on that?*
- *Can you explain that further?*

Support Ideas:

Examples could include:

- personal anecdotes
- examples from other people
- examples from text
- examples from your own research

An example of that can be seen in...

One example of this is....

Building on Someone Else's Ideas

“Piggybacking”

In English, if we “piggyback” off another idea, that means we are using the previous speaker's idea to support our own.

I'd like to piggyback off that idea and add that...

Challenging Someone Else's Ideas

Polite Agreement:

I'd like to add to that...

Another example of that is...

I've had a similar experience to that....

Polite Disagreement: Usually we frame a disagreement by complimenting the other speaker on his or her ideas, or by expressing understanding of the ideas before we disagree. See examples below.

I see your point, but...

I like your ideas, but have you thought of_____?

I understand your logic, but I don't agree that...

I see what you're saying, but other people might not see it that way.

Partial Agreement:

I agree with some of your points, but I don't see how it's related to_____.

I think you're on the right track, but what about_____?

I don't agree with_____, but at the very least we can agree on_____.

Going Off-Topic:

Americans often call separate but related topics "tangents." If you "go on a tangent" you are talking about something that is not directly part of the topic. Usually, if you go on a tangent in class, you must connect it back to whatever was previously discussed.

I have a slight tangent...

I'd like to go on a tangent to talk about....

This is a little off-topic, but I'd like to talk about...

Paraphrasing

In English, we don't just paraphrase when we're writing a paper. We also paraphrase when we are confirming something that another speaker said.

Examples:

According to what I've heard from_____....

From what I understand, this article is trying to say that...

Rephrasing:

Are you trying to say that....?

Let me see if I understand what you're saying...

So, what you're saying is....

Synthesizing

So, to bring all of these ideas together, there is proof/there is no proof that....

All of this evidence shows that.....

Although the data shows____, further research is still needed in the area of_____.

If we connect____to_____, we can see that....

Interruptions

In certain contexts of American conversation, it is acceptable to interrupt someone if you want to make a point about something but the person is already moving on to another topic.

Examples of this include:

If I can jump in for one second, I'd like to add...

Before we continue, I'd like to add something.

Sample Evaluation Rubric for Presentations

Questions to ask yourself when giving or listening to a presentation.

Content Organization:

- Is the content relevant? Does the speaker stay on topic (does not get distracted by other topics)?
- Is there a logical progression in the development of an argument or research project?

Creativity

- Did the presenter put thought into each slide? Is the project itself being discussed in a fresh or new perspective?
- Does the presenter use visual aids (pictures, charts, videos, slides, etc.)? How helpful are the visual aids?

Delivery

- Does the presenter speak at a good pace (not too slowly or too quickly)?
- Does the presenter use appropriate body language (no foot or finger tapping, fidgeting, or pacing)?
- Does the presenter maintain eye contact with the audience?
- Does the presenter engage the audience? How does he or she interact with the audience? Did the presenter seem prepared for most questions?

Vocabulary List

Word	Definition	Context
Eye contact	Looking your audience or other speaker in the eye	Americans consider good listeners and speakers to make a lot of eye contact to show that they are engaged.
Flow	How well your presentation and speech comes together	The discussion really flowed from one topic to the next.
Pace/pacing	Pace refers to speed in general, and also to how quickly or slowly someone speaks	The pacing of the presentation was a little too fast for me.
Talk with your hands	Use your hands and lots of body language to convey your ideas	People who talk with their hands might also be called “animated.”
(to have) Stage fright	This noun describes someone who is afraid of speaking or appearing formally in public	During the performance, he got stage fright and completely forgot his lines.
Equipment		
Podium	A podium is a stand or platform in the front of the room where speakers may put their papers. A microphone is usually attached.	Come up to the podium Stand at the podium
Overhead	Overhead refers to the projector screen.	Please look at the chart on the overhead.
Mike	Short for microphone	Hand me the mike. Mike check 1, 2, 3.
Verbs		
To get rolling	To start (a very casual way of opening a discussion)	Let’s get rolling, shall we?
To wrap up	To finish	I’d like to wrap up by discussing any questions you might have.
To stall	The verb “stall” means to delay someone or something, usually when you are uncomfortable or not ready to give a response.	You’re stalling. Just answer the question, please.
To give acknowledgments	To give thanks to whoever helped you or introduced you before the presentation	I’d like to acknowledge/give acknowledgement to the Department Chair...

Additional Resources

General Tips: <http://www.englishclub.com/speaking/presentations.htm>

Innovative TED Talks: http://www.ted.com/themes/presentation_innovation.html

[Turbo Charge Your Presentation](#)

Preventing Audience Boredom: <http://www.speakingaboutpresenting.com/content/presentation-tips-beating-audience-boredom/>

Body Language: <https://www.toastmasters.org/resources/public-speaking-tips/gestures-and-body-language>