

# Group Presentations

It is more than likely that you will have to give a group presentation during your college career and beyond. The tips and explanations below outline how to smoothly coordinate and execute the group work and final presentation.

## Important Things to Know about Group Oral Presentation Format

- Each member of the group bears equal responsibility for shaping the **focus** of group presentation and ***doing his, her, their fair share of the work.***
- Each group should know the specific time requirements for the assignment (group and individual).
- Each member of the group should have **equal time** to present his, her, their contribution. (Calculate time needed: introduction of group project, individual presentations, conclusion of group project.)
- DO NOT READ YOUR PRESENTATION – rather, practice your presentation so you can talk conversationally with your audience.
- **Schedule a consultation and/or group rehearsal with The Center for Speech & Effective Advocacy (CSEA).**

## Speaking Guidelines

- When possible, oral presentations should be delivered in an ***extemporaneous style*** (typed notes; conversational style; good eye contact with audience).
- All presentations should be clearly structured and well detailed.
- The group as a whole should have an “introduction” and a “conclusion.” That means that two members of the group should take on this responsibility -- to introduce and conclude the presentation (in addition to their own individual presentation).
- The group should decide on speaking order: Why does it make sense for speaker A to go before speaker B, and so forth? **What is the logic for your group structure?** At the end of each individual presentation, speakers should offer a transition to the next speaker (what's the connection?).

**Like writing, oral presentations require extensive process work. Here are some suggestions for “processing” your group presentations:**

1. Remember your primary objective (See assignment prompt).
2. Your audience: your peers in this class. How can you make your group presentation **relevant** to what they already know? How can you make **connections** for them? How can you **add** to what they already know?
3. Share tasks – be smart about collecting and sorting through reliable information for your presentation.
4. Use credible sources. (Use recommended materials).
5. Make sure you cite these sources correctly in your bibliography.

6. If you use these sources in your oral presentation, use **oral citation** (e.g., Dray argues . . .). If you are using quoted material in the presentation, please make sure your audience knows you are quoting (e.g., Shackel says that, and I'm quoting here, ". . ." OR "according to historian Philip Dray, . . ."). Provide pg. #s for quotations (p. 16).
7. As a group, decide on an **organizing focus** for the presentation. What are your primary points? In what order should they be presented?
8. As a group, decide how much detail you can include in your time allotment. The group **MUST** keep each speaker within her/his/their time limits. Which group members will play the role of timekeeper in your group?
9. As a group, decide whether you need some sort of visual support. If you use visual support, remember that less is generally more. A "rookie" mistake in public presentations is to over do it via a powerpoint or other information-giving strategy. You might consider giving your audience a handout with important information (with sources in proper citation format).
10. Practice several times, as a group. Perform at least one "dress rehearsal." Practice your individual presentations on your own. **Be professional and polished.**

## Check Lists

### Working with your group:

1. Chose one group member to be in charge of scheduling group meetings.
2. Exchange contact information.
3. Schedule group meetings.
4. Schedule consultation or/and rehearsal appointment with CSEA.
5. Divide research collection and reading tasks; **meet** to talk through these sources and get a sense of the "flow" of the group presentation.
6. Decide which group members will deliver the introduction and conclusion
7. If there is visual support, decide how to combine all visual support into one document (this will save time).
8. Meet with your group to work out transitions BETWEEN each individual speech.
9. Do more than one rehearsal; individuals should rehearse their contribution several times.
10. Bring ALL MATERIALS to be turned in after you speak.

### Working Individually:

1. Collect and read/view materials relevant to your individual presentation.
2. Take careful notes, including page numbers (in case you quote a source).
3. BE VERY CAREFUL with published material; use quotation marks if you use more than 2 words-in-sequence from a source. If you paraphrase a source, also provide page numbers (for the outline). IT IS CONSIDERED PLAGIARISM IF YOU READ ALOUD SOMEONE ELSE'S WORDS WITHOUT GIVING THEM CREDIT.
4. Show up to the agreed upon group meetings and be prepared.
5. Assemble your individual speaking **outline**; include in-text citation for quoted material and for paraphrased material. **Use at least 14 font and double space (so you can find your place easily).**

6. Practice your presentation, several times, and **time** it. In a group presentation, divide the total time available by the number of people in the group. How much time should each speaker have?
7. If you are giving the group's overall introduction or conclusion, you should prepare 1-2 minutes of presentation. Intro/conclusion time DOES NOT count against your speaking time for the group presentation. The introduction should preview the primary conclusion of the group and should introduce the line-up of speakers; the conclusion should remind the audience of the key points the group has presented.
8. Show up for rehearsal, fully prepared. Listen carefully to feedback.
9. Polish your speaker notes.

### **Delivery Tips**

1. Extemporaneous style means that your presentation *sounds like a conversation* and not like you are "reading" from a printed page.
2. Work on *expressive voice, pacing and pause, and volume*. Also, work on *clear enunciation*.
  - a. Pace: if you tend to speak fast, s-l-o-w down. Vary your pace . . . slow down at strategic points . . . pick up the pace when you can.
  - b. Expressive voice: voices are naturally "melodic" but stress or anxiety can cause us to speak in a "monotone" which is not engaging to an audience; work on overcoming anxiety to the extent that your voice is expressive
  - c. Volume: If you are giving your speech in a large room where it is difficult to hear, work on "projection" of your voice.
  - d. Enunciation: use your tongue, lips and alveolar ridge to give "crisp" and "clear" sound to your speech flow; practice at least one doing exaggerated enunciation
  - e. Breathing: Control your breathing; slow breath in and slow breath out can help control anxiety.
3. Eye contact with the audience. This is a VERY IMPORTANT part of your appeal to your audience. Practice looking around the room while you speak. Try to look at everyone in the room, at least once. In order to do this you need to:
  - a. Practice your speech multiple times so you are VERY familiar with the script
  - b. Work with a script that you've practiced with, at least once; mark important areas; hand write or type notes yourself.
4. Facial expressiveness – audiences like for speakers to have expressive faces. That's what most of us anticipate in conversations. Anxiety tends to cause some speakers to "freeze" both their face and their voices.
5. Hand and arm gestures. Again, human beings use hand/arm gestures in conversation. A speaker who is able to use gestures in a naturally appearing manner is generally pleasing to an audience.
6. YOU CAN FEEL NERVOUS AND LOOK COOL, CALM AND COLLECTED. Remember that. Audiences do not know how you feel, so don't tell them.

### **Oral Style** [distinct from written texts]

- Write your speech notes as though you were talking to your friends (you are very serious about the topic and you want them to understand your points).
- Use personal pronouns, colloquial words and contractions – as you do in conversation.
- Use repetition of key words and phrases to emphasize ideas (audiences cannot “re-read” your speech, so strategic repetition is important).
- Use a VERY CLEAR organizational structure: preview main points, use transitions between main points, summarize main points in the conclusion.
- Use previews, transitions and summaries to help audiences remember your points
- Use shorter sentences and thought units so you are easier to follow.
- Use concrete details and imagery so audiences can “see” what you are saying.
- If you use visual support (e.g., PowerPoint), DO NOT ignore your audience! Position yourself so you can gesture toward the visual, but do not “talk” to the slide or keep your back turned to the audience.

### **Space**

If possible, investigate the location of your group presentation. Think about these things:

- How is the room set up?
- Where is the podium/kiosk, relative to the audience?
- If you are using visual support, where should you position yourself relative to the screen?
- If you are using visual support, do you have a clicker? If not, how will you manage if the podium/kiosk is in an awkward place for speakers?

### **Summary**

- In group presentations, you have three obligations:  
(1) to **prepare yourself** well for your individual presentation;  
(2) to **help the group** focus and shape the logical flow of the group presentation; and, (3) to think about and focus upon your **audience**.
- You may not be able to control group activity (to your satisfaction), but you CAN control **how well you prepare** for your individual presentation.
- Practice your individual presentation several times.
- Practice with your group as many times as possible.
- Make an appointment with the Center for Speech and Effective Advocacy.

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