

**Listen up - 10 tips for giving great presentations!**

Being able to give informative and inspiring presentations is a great skill to develop while you are at College, as many jobs will require you to give some kind of presentation occasionally. This might be at team meetings, selling a product or business idea, giving a paper at a conference or as part of community projects. When you are planning your presentation, keep in mind the following tips:



**Tip 1: Audience**

Before you start planning your presentation, think about who your audience will be and what they need to know. Make sure you keep the audience in mind when you are doing research for the information you will include. For example if your audience is informed and has technical knowledge you will pitch at a different level from if you are talking to the general public or to a school class.



**Tip 2: Knowledge**

Do enough research so that you feel confident with your topic. You will need to be selective with the information that you put into your presentation, but ensure that you know extra information so you are able to answer questions with authority.



**Tip 3: Structure**

Decide what the most important point you want your audience to remember from your presentation is, and introduce them to that point in the

introduction. Think carefully about the order of the information you are going to present and what your main argument will be. Most effective presentations are structured the same way:

- A title that makes the audience look forward to hearing what you have to say
- An introduction where you briefly outline the topic and the main point of the argument
- A main body which is a series of points with the best first (this is important in case you run out of time)
- A conclusion which shows how your arguments have led to the most important point which you introduced at the beginning.

**4 part structure**



#### **Tip 4: Amount**

Don't try to include too much information; it is surprising how little an audience will be able to take in. Make sure the audience are aware of the most important point and re-iterate it at the end (don't repeat over and over again as this becomes tedious to listen to). In a 20 minute presentation you may only be able to make 5 or 6 points and expand on them.

**6+6+6**



#### **Tip 5: Visuals**

Think carefully about how to present information visually (Audiences often get PowerPoint overload - sometimes the best presentations have no visuals at all!). Don't try to put too much text on a slide and make sure the colour scheme is easy to read. Use the 6+6+6 rule for best results on PowerPoint (no more than 6 words per line + no more than 6 lines per slide+ no more than 6 slides per 10 minute presentation.) There are alternatives to PowerPoint such as Prezi and Photostory – you can make an appointment in the Learning Centre to learn how to use these programs. You may want to use video or sound, however too much video can mean the audience dozes off. You may also want to consider using a flipchart if the presentation involves discussion. Handouts allow you to add extra information that the audience can read afterwards.



### Tip 6: Notes

Decide how you feel comfortable giving the presentation; this might be with cue cards, using your visuals as aids, reading from a script or memorising completely. Make sure that however you give the presentation that you look up at the audience every so often and that you engage with the people in the room. Try not to concentrate just on one person as this can make them feel uncomfortable.



### Tip 7: Pace

Rehearse your presentation beforehand with your visuals and check your timing. You may have to slow down your normal speaking voice so the audience can follow what you are saying, approx. 130 words per minute is recommended.



### Tip 8: Voice

**130 words per min**



The most important part of a presentation is that everyone can hear what you are saying, if you are not sure ask at the beginning if people can hear you from the back. You don't need to shout, rather you need to articulate clearly and speak at a pitch which is easily heard. Most people tend to have a higher pitch when they are nervous which can be more difficult to listen. Try concentrating on lowering your voice slightly on the first few sentences of your presentation.



### Tip 9: Answering Questions

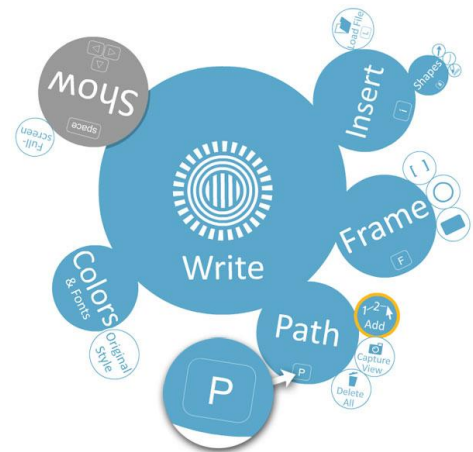
Getting lots of questions at the end of a presentation is a good thing as it means that the audience has engaged with the subject. Answer questions as fully as you can. If something is your own opinion rather than fact then make sure you say that. If you don't know the answer to something then thank the audience member for the question, say it is something you have not yet considered but will do so. You might also ask what their opinion is.



### Tip 10: Have a Backup Plan

If the technology doesn't work then have a plan of how to deliver your presentation. This might be having a copy of the presentation printed out for the audience to look at if the screen doesn't work. If you can, go to the room beforehand and check you know the layout and test your presentation. Know your topic well enough that you are able to improvise if needed!

### PowerPoint Alternatives:



Prezi is an online tool for creating presentations. It works differently from PowerPoint as you can see the whole presentation as if it were on one large piece of paper; it then allows you to zoom in on different parts as you go through your presentation. It is easy to upload video and picture files. Go to **[www.prezi.com](http://www.prezi.com)** to view some presentations or sign up for an account



Photo Story is a Microsoft program for making presentations similar to PowerPoint. It is much easier, however, to add a sound track and a voiceover. It works especially well for presentations that run like a story and don't require very much text.

Photo Story is on some computers in the Learning Centre. Once you create your presentation, it will run on any computer.

**Don't forget, you can always book an appointment in the Learning Centre to be shown how to use these programs. If the skills room is not busy, you can book this through your tutor to practice your presentation.**