



# Library Helpsheet

## Presentation Skills

At some point in class, you will have to make an oral presentation either on your own or as part of a group. Usually, this involves using PowerPoint to make a slide show and speaking at the same time. Here are a few hints and tips to help you prepare and make a successful presentation. However, nothing is perfect without lots of practice!

### Preparation

- ❖ Know your **subject** and be confident in what you are saying
- ❖ **Structure** your presentation logically so the audience can follow it – the old saying is – tell them what you are going to say; say it; and tell them what you've said
- ❖ Use the correct **tone** – if it is a serious subject then jokes are not appropriate
- ❖ Decide on the format of your notes:
  - Full script – like an essay you can read
  - Key points – headings and subheadings which prompt you to speak
  - Note cards – key points for each slide on each card (remember to number them like your slides to stay in order)
- ❖ Have hand-outs ready if you must give them out
- ❖ Practice your presentation to get the timing right
- ❖ Practice talking and clicking your presentation to make it slick.



### Know your audience

- ❖ Make the presentation at the right level – if your audience has no knowledge of your topic, then explain key terms
- ❖ Explain technical terms or jargon if necessary, for your audience
- ❖ Use examples relevant to your audience.

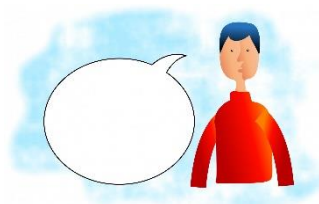
### Voice projection

- ❖ Keep your head up when speaking; just glance at your notes
- ❖ Project your voice – not necessarily just louder, but breathe deeply, relax your vocal chords, and pronounce each word clearly, with your head up so that you can be heard
- ❖ Use a variety of tones and pitches with your voice – a monotone will put your audience to sleep!
- ❖ Pause to let the audience keep up with your points and to let you take in a deep breath.



### Pace of talk

- ❖ Nerves can make you speak more quickly – try not to rush your talk; speak slowly, clearly and pause to take a breath
- ❖ Avoid speaking in a slow monotone which will send your audience to sleep!





## Eye contact

- ❖ Always look at your audience – you will seem sincere and confident
- ❖ Eye contact maintains the attention of your audience but don't focus on one person as it will make them uncomfortable and the rest of the audience will feel ignored.

## Nerves

- ❖ Everyone gets nervous! A little anxiety can be good to focus yourself.
- ❖ Overcome nerves by:
  - Planning your presentation
  - Sticking to your notes
  - Deep breathing
  - Having a sip of water
  - Relaxing your lower jaw and opening your mouth widely 2-3 times before your presentation to get rid of tension
  - Tense your face muscles in your forehead and purse your lips, then hold for 30 seconds and relax. This will relieve tension in your face.



## Body posture

- ❖ Stand with your feet apart and spread your weight evenly to keep you balanced
- ❖ Try to avoid standing behind a desk – no barriers between you and the audience
- ❖ Don't sit down when presenting – you want your audience to see and hear you
- ❖ When using a PowerPoint presentation, remember to talk towards the audience and not the screen
- ❖ Remember to smile if appropriate and try not to use your hands too much whilst you are talking
- ❖ Don't fidget with pens, glasses, etc. or put your hands in your pockets
- ❖ Be animated and lively but don't pace around as it is distracting.



## Using audio-visual (A-V) aids

- ❖ A-V aids should support your talk – not be the basis of it
- ❖ Most common A-V aids are: PowerPoint slides, hand-outs, physical objects, DVD player, and flip chart
- ❖ Make sure you can work the equipment before the presentation
- ❖ When using PowerPoint:
  - Make your slides clear and have headings
  - Don't put too much information on each slide – 20 words maximum
  - Don't have too many slides – 8-10 is best
  - Don't talk to the screen – face the audience
- ❖ Use links to You Tube if relevant but only short clips which add to your talk.

## Questions

- ❖ If you are allowing questions, plan your answers beforehand to likely questions
- ❖ Say at the start to hold any questions until the end.

