

Oral Presentations Workshop

Preparing, Presenting, and
Using PowerPoint as An Effective Aid

Part 1:

Preparing an Oral Presentation

Part 2:

Presenting an Oral Presentation

Part 3:

Using PowerPoint Effectively

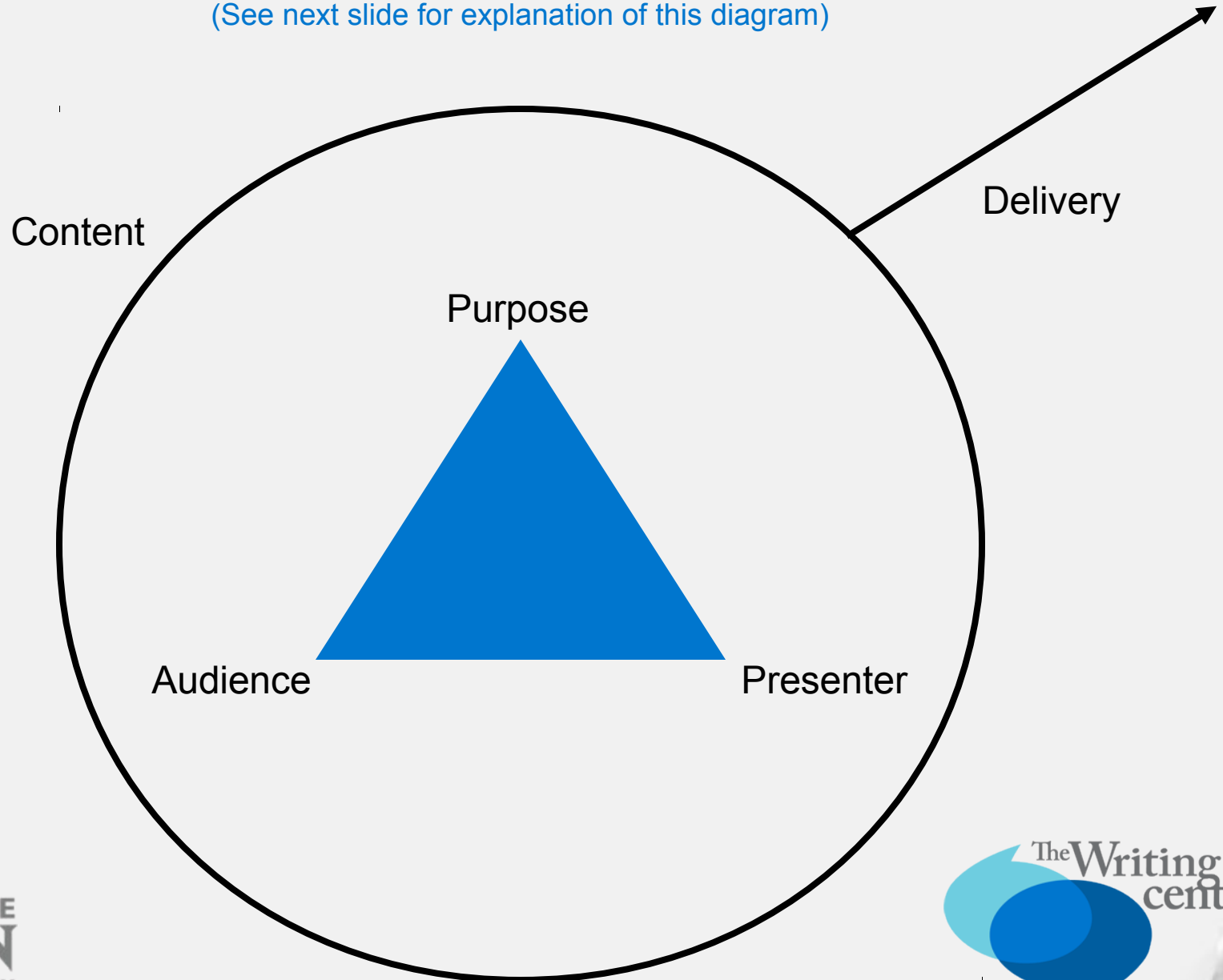
Part 1: Preparing an Oral Presentation

Getting Started

- Identify the expectations of the assignment
 - How long should the presentation be?
 - What is the intent of this presentation? To inform? Persuade? Critique? Educate? Inspire?
- Analyze the audience
 - What do they know about your topic? About you?
 - What do they expect?
 - Are they interested? Biased?

Identifying the Rhetorical Situation

(See next slide for explanation of this diagram)



The diagram on the previous slide illustrates the parts of a rhetorical situation (like the one created by your oral presentation). Identifying the purpose and the audience of your presentation will allow you to choose the appropriate content and delivery style.

For example, if the purpose is to persuade and the audience is biased, the content should include especially compelling evidence. You should also deliver this content in a way that assures your skeptical audience you are a trustworthy expert.

How is preparing an oral presentation like writing a paper?

- Research
- Overall Organization:
 - Introduction
 - Thesis Statement
 - Supporting information/proof (Body)
 - Conclusion

How is preparing an oral presentation NOT like writing a paper?

- Multipurpose introductions
- Rhetorical signposts
- Memory aids/Meta-commentary
- Strategies to highlight important points

Multipurpose Introductions

- Hook the audience
- Preview the content of the presentation
- Establish common ground with the audience
- Build credibility

Rhetorical Signposts

- Give the audience cues that help them follow your ideas. Some examples are:
 - Numbering your points (1st, 2nd, 3rd)
 - Making old-to-new transitions
 - Using parallel sentence structures

Memory Aids/Meta-commentary

- Also help the audience follow your ideas. Some examples are:
 - Repeating key words or ideas
 - Restating your thesis when you transition into a new idea
 - Grouping a set of ideas together under a single heading
 - Giving a short internal summary
 - Explaining to the audience exactly *why* you're telling them a particular piece of information

Strategies to Highlight Important Points

- Include:
 - Repeating or reiterating an important idea
 - Using key words/vocab
 - Flagging: “If you remember only one thing...”
 - Doing the unexpected (using humor, telling an anecdote, changing your tone or volume, presenting an attention grabbing visual, getting the audience involved).

Part 2: Presenting an Oral Presentation

Overcoming Nervousness

“A survey of more than 2,500 Americans revealed that people feared public speaking before a group more than death. Amazing as it may seem, many Americans appear to consider public speaking a fate worse than death.” - Stephen E. Lucas, *The Art of Public Speaking*

Delivery DOs

- Breathe
- Appear confident and knowledgeable
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Maintain good eye contact
- Occupy the space
- Stand up straight
- Use natural hand motions for emphasis
- Be prepared for Q&A
- Relax and try to have fun!

Delivery DON'Ts

- Let your nervousness distract the audience
- Speak too quickly
- Read directly from a script
- Pace, rock, slouch, tap your hands or feet, twirl your hair, or adjust your clothes
- Constantly use distracting hand gestures
- Chew gum, eat, or drink
- Repeat stalling words like: um, er, uh, basically, you know, and like
- Speak with rising inflection (when the ends of your sentences rise in tone like a question)

Scripting vs. Notecards

- Format notes with bullet points and important words highlighted (so they're easy to reference as you speak).
- If you want to write out a fully scripted version to practice, that's OK, but convert it into notes for the actual presentation. **You won't be able to resist the temptation to read from a script.**
- **Factoid:** It takes about two minutes to read a typed, double-spaced page. As you write, you can remember this to keep track of how long your presentation will be.

Convert this Script!

Rewrite the paragraph below. Try to create notes you could use during a presentation.

Autism is a pervasive developmental disorder, characterized by impaired communication, excessive rigidity, and emotional detachment. An article titled “Repetitive Behaviors in Autistic Disorder” states that some common characteristics of autistic children are inflexibility to adhere to routines and rituals, repetitive motor manifestations, and a persistent preoccupation with parts of objects. Children with autism do not all have the same behaviors, and these different characteristics are not always stable over time. This means some children with autism may have a hard time sitting still through an entire story time, or they may use repetitive behaviors such as hand gestures and body movements that are different from other children.

Practice, Practice, Practice

- Do a test run in front of a mirror
- Demonstrate your presentation for a friend
- Videotape it
- Don't forget to:
 - Use your notecards!
 - Time it!

CLUB (the Collaborative Learning Hub), which is located in Johnson Center 311, has a Presentation Practice Space where you can record your presentation, save it to a flashdrive, and watch it on your computer. Their hours are M-R 9-7 and F 10-6. Lab assistants are there to help!

Part 3: Using PowerPoint Effectively

PowerPoint: Visuals

- Images *must* be relevant and enhance the presentation in a meaningful way.
- Tables, charts, and graphs should be easy to read and understand.

The following slides, excerpted from “How to Avoid Death by PowerPoint” by Lisa Andion illustrate what *not* to do.

LARGE PARAGRAPHS OF TEXT

Before you get started I'd like to share a few ideas regarding PowerPoint's capabilities and uses. PowerPoint is a powerful tool that enhances a presentation, providing the main points in a visually exciting way. It is a tool that is meant to supplement the speaker, not replace him or her. This is something that is very important to keep in mind. PowerPoint is meant to combine graphics with text to give the most effective presentation possible to an audience. Therefore, each slide in a presentation should contain at least one graphic. Here are a few general rule of thumb ideas to keep in mind while creating a Powerpoint Presentation...

no!



Design Styles

□

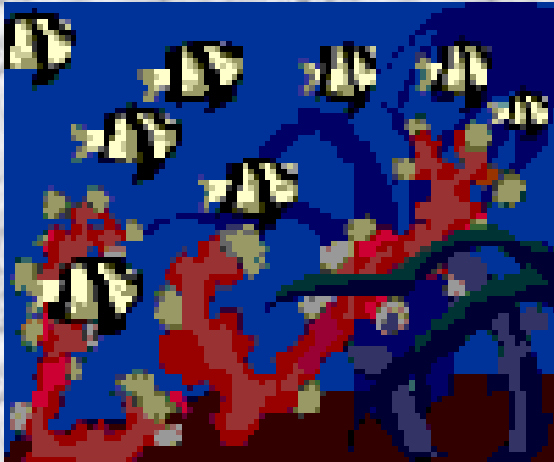
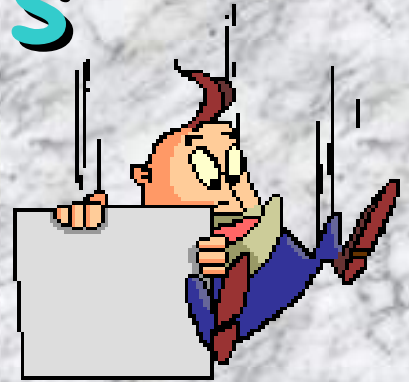
□ This also includes font style, size, color and effects

□

□

Animation Effects

- Don't Over Do It!
- Too Distracting





Slide Transitions

- **Choose one Slide transition**
 - **Remember consistency across your presentation works best**
 - **Keep it simple!**

PowerPoint: Text

- Use text to back up your point and reinforce key terms and concepts
- Keep text to a minimum
- Use “white space” to set off blocks of text
- Use bullet points as default text format
- Make phrase structure parallel
- Use assertion-evidence structure

Benefits of Parallelism (Incorrect Example)

- Clarity
- It creates emphasis
 - Equal weight for equal items
 - The entire series is more prominent
- Fluent, flowing
 - To help readers anticipate what's next
 - Make progress through rhythm

The bullet points above *are not* parallel. (*Clarity* is a noun, *It creates emphasis* is a phrase, and *Fluent, flowing* are adjectives.)

Benefits of Parallelism (Correct Example)

- Clarity
- Emphasis
 - Equal weight for equal items
 - Prominence for entire series
- Fluency/Flow
 - Anticipation by readers
 - Progress through rhythm

The bullet points on this slide (all nouns) *are* parallel. Doesn't it read a bit more smoothly?

The Assertion-Evidence Structure

- Because the purpose of the PowerPoint is to help the audience understand the content, rather than to provide talking points for the speaker, using the Assertion-Evidence Structure will help shape an argument-based presentation.
- This structure often features a sentence-assertion headline supported by visual evidence.

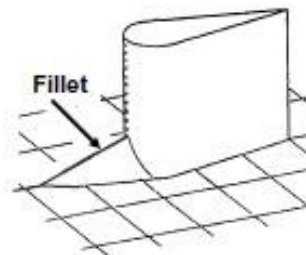
Example of Visual Evidence

Fillets reduce leading edge vortices in nature and in engineering

Fillet on dorsal fin of shark



Fillet on Seawolf submarine



[Devenport et al., 1991]



The Assertion-Evidence Structure is useful because:

- It helps the audience understand the content of the presentation
- It helps the audience engage with the speaker instead of just reading content on the presentation
- It helps the speaker engage with the audience by having talking points but not scripting exactly what to say

Don't Forget to Proofread Your Visuals!

For a little practice writing effective PowerPoint slides, go back to slide 18, “Convert this Script!” See if you can rewrite that same paragraph into an appropriate PowerPoint slide.

Good Luck with All Your Future
Oral Presentations!

Resources Consulted

- Rebecca McGill, Emily Viggiano, Ranjani Murali: Sample oral presentations
- Candy Fowler: Parallelism lesson, Composition 101 oral presentation lesson notes
- Lisa Andion: “How to Avoid Death by PowerPoint”
- Susan Lawrence: sample rubrics (Georgia Tech Research Corp., Pam Lewis & Heinz School of Public Policy at Carnegie Mellon University)
- Sharon Zuber & The College of William and Mary’s Writing Resource Center: Rubric, Delivery DOs and DON’Ts, oral presentation handouts
- Penn State University: “Rethinking the Design of Presentation Slides: The Assertion-Evidence Structure” (<http://www.writing.engr.psu.edu/slides.html>)