Presentations for assessment.  
A guide

WHY ARE PRESENTATIONS PART OF ASSESSMENT?

Being able to argue a point of view, persuade or inform a group of people are important skills for everyone. But they need thought and practice. Anyone can improve their presentation skills: use this guide and have a go.

Download the planning sheet (bit.ly/MQUPres) in Word to help you organise your presentation.

Top hiring criteria (Graduate Careers Australia survey, 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>48.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic results</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork skills</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EMPLOYERS SAY ... graduates need to improve their business presentation skills, especially their ability to adapt their content to a range of audiences - team members, managers, clients, suppliers, investors and partners - and to “tell the story”.
Brainstorm and research

THINGS TO DO

**Understand the task**

Start with the presentation task description and rubric/criteria, but brainstorm your own ideas.

- Clarify with your teacher if unclear - discuss refining the task or trying something creative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is it to persuade, explain, critique, motivate…?</td>
<td>Who is your audience? What do they know? What’s in it for them?</td>
<td>What do you want to achieve? Win a client or contract? Sell your idea?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Example : A third year pitch to industry panel in a PACE subject**

Present persuasive information. Inspire confidence.

Industry panel - experts, judging, will this work in industry? Teacher - expert, meets assessment criteria? Students - novice, information, how to improve?

Recognition and feedback from guest panelists - would they accept your pitch? A good mark.

**Research the context**

- If in a group, discuss ideas together - try mapping out your ideas. Put someone in charge of managing the presentation.
- Where to search? What to search?
  - Read around your subject - eg current events, key players/thinkers - via newspapers or online journals/blogs
  - Google and Wikipedia are good for an overview of a subject, but don’t rely on them
  - Go to the relevant **libguide (libguides.mq.edu.au)** for your subject to search databases, journals and other publications.
  - Ask for help: tutor, librarian, lecturer, classmate.

**Start early on your presentation plan**

Don’t leave it until the end of your project to think about your presentation.
Design and build

Focus on the audience and their needs: the audience is the ‘hero’ of the story – your presentation should take them on a journey.

THINGS TO DO

**Structure**

Start with the story, not with the slides.

- **Outline the story:**
  - what makes it interesting for the audience? Use real-life examples, surprising facts.
  - Try starting with - a shocking fact; a provoking question; an anecdote; or paint a picture, “Imagine...”, “Did you know that...”
  - Try ending with - a call to action or challenge; a quote that summarises your talk; finish a story you started earlier; repeat your opening argument. Tie it all together.
  - what are the main points that help you with your goal?

- **Clear structure and flow**
  - Structure as a presentation - don’t just re-hash a written report.

- **Allow 130-150 words/minute. A 5 min talk is 650-750 words.**

**Visuals**

- **Purpose, audience and result - does your design support this?**
  - Consider style - eg corporate or creative?
  - Aim for clarity and brevity, with a common style (colour, illustrations, language) across slides

- **Try options besides PowerPoint (eg Prezi, Canva or easel.ly).**
- **Search for images that are properly licenced for your use. Creative Commons (search.creativecommons.org) is a great place to look.**

**DON’T FORGET**

- Check grammar, spelling
- Reference/credit any sources
- Anticipate questions - prepare answers
- Consider a handout for the audience if appropriate
Athletes practise so they can perform. So do presenters.

**THINGS TO DO**

**Practise the whole presentation**
- Practise out loud with visuals at least twice & with a timer - a group needs to practise together.
  - Use the **practice pods** in the library (alternatives: MUSE, online eg via Skype)
  - Video yourself and review: you might hate doing this, but it is a powerful way to improve performance.

**Performance**
- Check these aspects of your performance (or ask someone to check them for you):
  - Pace - not too fast (slow down!), fits into allocated time
  - Facing the audience and eye contact with everyone
  - Loud enough for all to hear
  - Not reading - using spoken rather than written expression.
    Tip: visualise the points along the journey of your speech to remember ([bit.ly/journeyNoNotes](https://bit.ly/journeyNoNotes))
  - Speaking - light and shade (rather than monotone), expressive, enthusiastic, no words tripping you up
  - Confident with audience interaction and use of equipment
  - Body posture relaxed and confident. Gestures non-threatening (palms up) and friendly.
  - Facial expressions - enthusiastic? friendly? curious? welcoming?
  - Use transitions or signposts between sections and speakers, eg ('So that’s why x is important. Now Jim will talk about y.’ ‘Thanks, Julie...’)
  - Good answers to questions (have group members or a friend ask questions during practice)

**Make sure the core point comes across clearly**

**DON’T FORGET**

Before the day
- ✔ Check the venue, setup and technology
- ✔ Have a backup plan for technology - eg bring your files on a USB stick, email them to yourself and have printouts
- ✔ Re-confirm the date and time
On the day

Relax, take control: own it!
If you’ve done the preparation, the presentation should go smoothly; you can even enjoy it.

THINGS TO DO

Preparation
- Pre-presentation warmups eg power posing (bit.ly/PowPose), stretching/yawning, vocal exercises (bit.ly/VocalWarmups)
- Arrive and set up early. Check that file(s) are all working

Remember
Delivery
- Come out from behind the podium, remember posture and gestures.
- Look at everyone, not just the tutor!
- Ask a friend to smile at you from the audience
- Pause briefly in place of “umms” and “ahhs”. Try a sip of water.
- If you make a mistake, acknowledge it and move on.
- If you are not speaking, smile and nod to support your fellow presenters.

Leading a discussion or Q&A
- Use ‘open’ questions that have more than one possible answer.
- If you ask for an audience response, wait 30 seconds - people need time to think.
- If asked a question, take time to think before responding (buy some time with “that’s a very interesting question”).
  If you don’t know the answer, admit it and say you’ll look into it.
- Repeat hard-to-hear audience questions for the whole audience

Have fun!

Feedback and reflection

THINGS TO DO
On the same day as your presentation write your reflections down:
- Consider the feedback you received. What do you think about the comments?
- What did I/we do well what worked?
- What would I do differently next time?
- Were there particularly tricky audience questions? Why were they tricky?
- What worked/didn’t work in other presentations I saw?
## Presentation planning sheet

In Word (bit.ly/MQUPres)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of presentation</th>
<th>Time limit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Group members’ contact details and availability</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Brainstorm and research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Result</th>
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</table>

### Tasks for group members

### Research terms and sources of information/research/data.

### Design and build

#### Take-home message (what should the audience walk out thinking?)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible audience questions</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
# Presentation planning sheet

In Word (bit.ly/MQUPres)

## Structure of presentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The story</th>
<th>Supporting visuals</th>
<th>Team member</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Middle (main points):</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ending:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Practice and preparation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Things to fix in presentation</th>
<th>Things to watch out for on the day</th>
<th>Who will bring the file(s) and material(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

## Feedback and reflection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What went well, and why?</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What could be improved, and how?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What worked well in other presentations?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>