# PRESENTING TO AN AUDIENCE

Presenting to an audience is something you will do at some point during your university study. It can be challenging but with careful planning, production, practice and preparation, you can present like a pro!

A good speaker:
- Has a clear **voice**
- Makes **eye contact**
- Can hold the audience's **attention**
- Knows the **subject**
- Uses **notes** effectively
- Looks **confident**
- Is **easy** to understand
- Has **prepared** in detail
- Shows **enthusiasm**

Planning

Production

Practice

Preparation

Presentation

Post-presentation
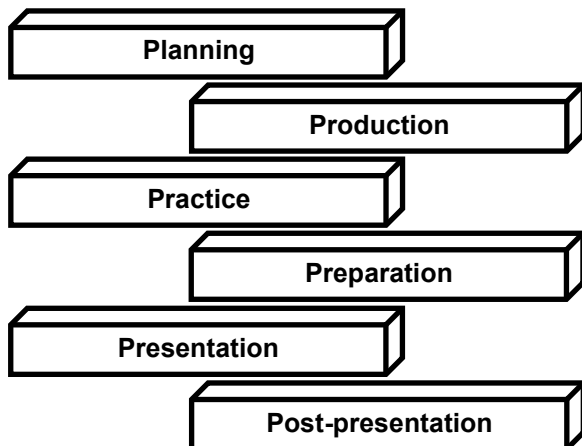
Planning:
When you are preparing the content, the most important things to consider are:
- Your **message**
- Your **audience**

Ask yourself:
- Does this point contribute to my purpose? (If not, remove it).
- What are the key points I want my audience to come away with?

Dot point your main ideas before you begin producing your presentation.

Production:
- **Research** your topic
- **Create** a clear structure (introduction, body, conclusion)
- **Make** notes or palm cards
- **Prepare** your slides/visual aids
- **Prepare** any handouts
- **Check** your timing

Presentation notes:

- Make sure your notes are large enough to read from a distance so you do not hold them too close to your face. Double spacing can also help.

- Make a note of when you need to change your slides.

- Number your pages in case they get mixed up.

- Highlight key words so you can easily find where you were up to.

> **TIP**
> The Internet and videos can crash, so do not depend on these. Have a backup plan. Even be prepared to present without slides in the case of a projector not working. This is where handouts can be useful.

Powerpoint tips:

- Use a basic, clean font like Arial.

- Use sort sentences and bullet points.

- Include key points only.

- Use a large font size (at least 24 point).

- Include visuals: diagrams and photos.

- Keep the design simple. Avoid using distracting animations and sound effects.

- Use a 'clicker' so you can move around.

- Remember to reference any content that is not your own in the slides.

Practise, Practise, Practise!

This will help you refine various elements of your presentation including your:

- Timing
- Clarity of notes
- Volume
- Pace
- Logic
- Visual aids

Preparation:

- Think about how you present yourself visually; be smart but comfortable.
- Check you have your USB, notes and materials with you.
- Get there early so you can check the equipment and seating.

TIP
Have backups of your presentation notes and slides — save to multiple USBs, email copies and bring a laptop/tablet if you can.
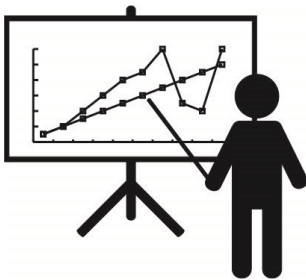
TIP
Always have an open bottle of water beside you. People's throats often dry up when presenting, because of their nerves. Having a pen can also help write down feedback or questions from the audience.

During your presentation:

- **Introduce** yourself briefly. Remember to smile and keep your shoulders back for confident body language.
- **Outline** the structure of your talk.
- **Look** at your audience, letting your gaze move around the room. Do not read your presentation out, just look at your notes as a guide. If you can, try to use your slides as a reminder of what to say next. However, make sure you do not turn your back to the audience.
- **Pause** after main points
- **Use** signaling words, e.g. *There are three issues I will address... First… Second…Third.*
- **Conclude** by tying your main points together.

Post-presentation:

- Attempt to answer audience questions, but do not feel you have to know everything. If you do not have an answer, say "good question, I will need to think about that further. Perhaps we can discuss it later one-on-one."
- Ask for constructive feedback from lecturers, tutors and fellow students – find out what you did well and what you can improve.
- Review the feedback you receive in relation to:
    - the content (aims, structure, evidence, message/purpose, visuals)
    - the delivery (voice, confidence, eye contact, body language).