

Oral Presentations: Basics

The Big Rule:

- 1) Tell them what you're going to tell them.
- 2) Tell them.
- 3) Tell them what you told them.

In other words, your presentation should have three parts: an introduction, body, and conclusion. Let's look at these three parts and see what you should include in each.

The Introduction

The purpose of the introduction is not only to introduce your topic, but also to interest your audience in the topic.

- Grab the audience's attention by somehow involving them in your topic. You can do this by asking a question, offering an interesting fact, using a quotation or telling a short story. (The question "How many people here have a home computer?" is a lot more interesting than "Today I'm going to tell you about the Internet.")
- You should preview the content of your presentation by offering a brief outline of what you will be discussing. You may also want to include why you choose this topic to present on.

The Body

The body of your presentation should support your introduction by offering facts, opinions, and reasons to support your topic. It should contain at least three ideas with supporting details to illustrate your point.

The Conclusion

The conclusion should restate the main points without giving examples. Think of it as a brief summary which emphasizes what you want the audience to remember. You can finish with a recommendation, a personal thought, an observation, or a question. Your closing or last statement should pull your presentation together.

Oral Presentations: Do's & Don'ts

1. **Be organized!** The more organized and **focused** your presentation is, the more relaxed you'll feel.
2. Breathe! (It helps you relax.)
3. Don't try to cover too much material. Remember your time limit.
4. Do **speak clearly**, slowly and at an appropriate level for your audience.
5. Use **vocabulary** that is **appropriate** for your audience. If you use new vocabulary, make sure you explain it and write it on the board.
6. Do **make eye contact** with all members of your audience.
7. Do **move** around.
8. Do use **hand gestures**.
9. Do allow the audience to ask **questions** at the end of your presentation.
10. **Don't read** your presentation. You can use short notes, but reading a presentation is unnatural; also, it makes it very difficult for your audience to follow.
11. Do **practice** your presentation with a partner or in front of the mirror.
12. Do remember to thank your audience and introduce the next speaker.

Impromptu Speeches

Impromptu speeches refer to those times when you get up in front of people and speak about a topic without preparation, or with very little preparation. Practicing impromptu speeches can help you prepare for these common tasks:

- Weddings or other celebrations
- In class when a professor asks for your opinion about something
- Job interview questions
- Small talk at parties
- Exchanging opinions at business or other meetings
- Speaking in public
- Making new friends and exchanging ideas

Practicing Impromptu Speeches

In order to become comfortable giving impromptu speeches, practice giving them in front of the mirror, in class, with other students, and so on. Giving impromptu speeches will help you prepare to give longer and more formal presentations in the future.

Rules for Practice

Here are some rules that I find helpful for practicing impromptu speeches on your own or in your class. Find someone to help you stick to the overall structure and correct common grammar problems. If you don't have anyone, record yourself. You'll be surprised how quickly you improve keeping these simple tips in mind.

- Give yourself 30 seconds to prepare
- Time yourself - try to first speak for one minute, then two minutes
- Get corrections
- Try, try again

Finally, here are a number of topic suggestions to help get you started practicing impromptu speeches.

Impromptu Speech Topic Suggestions

- Why are habits or routines helpful? / How can habits or routines lead to boredom?
- How does the weather affect your mood?
- Why don't parents understand their children?
- What makes a good parent?
- If you could take a year off from work or school, what would you do?
- What should teachers do more / less often?
- My three favorite animals.
- What makes a good teacher?
- Why your mom/dad is special.
- A day that stands out.
- The best surprise ever.
- A trip to remember.
- My favorite day of the year.
- If I could design a school.
- Why books are important.
- Three surprising facts about me.
- How to impress your parents.
- A job I'd love to have.
- If I could have dinner with anyone.
- My favorite book.
- An important lesson I've learned.
- Why sports are important.

- The worst chores at home.
- If I were in charge of the dining hall.
- Whom do you admire most?
- How to save money.
- Three things that scare me.
- Things I'll never eat.
- An experience with a bully.

<https://www.eslpartyland.com/teachers/listening/presentations1.htm>