

Presentations and Public Speaking

Types of Presentations

Informative: If your purpose is to inform the audience, you will seek to share ideas and knowledge, extend understanding, shape perceptions, or clarify opinions. Select clear, citable facts and data to present. Presentations of research or scholarly work fall into this category.

Persuasive: When attempting to influence attitudes or behaviors, urge commitment or action, or encourage change, you will be giving a persuasive speech. These speaking occasions require you to think about your audience, consider opposing ideas, and present support for your opinions. Debates and argumentative speeches fall into this category.

Ceremonial: Involves the celebration of events and special occasions, the recognition of heroes or heroines, revitalization of group commitments, and the inspiration of others. Graduation speeches, award speeches, or those celebrating achievements fall into this category.

How to Create a Good Speech or Presentation

- 1) Choose a topic that is important to you and your listeners.
- 2) Decide on the purpose of your speech and your intended outcome.
- 3) Consider your audience—age, location, occupation, common values, potential controversies, etc.
- 4) Select the information you will use in the body of your speech—quotes, facts, examples, testimony, allegory, stories, humor, etc., and consider what will be an appropriate tone and length to engage your audience.
- 5) If using visual aids such as handouts or PowerPoint, keep your designs simple and easy to understand—do not crowd PowerPoint slides or include images or data to which you will not directly refer. Also, if using video clips, make sure they are SHORT, CLEARLY relevant to your topic, of good resolution, and that they can be easily accessed on the day of your presentation.
- 6) Organize your points in a logical order.
- 7) Create a meaningful introduction and conclusion. These are the first and last things your audience will hear, so consider how to grab their attention and leave them with something about which to think.
- 8) Practice presenting out loud using appropriate pauses, limited hand and body gestures, good posture, eye contact with the audience, and a loud, clear voice at a reasonable speed.
- 9) In most cases you should not read your speech word-for-word from a paper; practice a great deal and prepare note cards or an easy-to-follow speaking outline instead.
- 10) Before the day of your presentation, check all slides and handouts and save copies of your materials in multiple locations, such as on a flash drive, in your email, and on the SUNY Canton network.