



## Presentations: planning, creating & delivering

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## Introduction

### **Presenting is an important skill.**

A lot of job interviews now include a presentation as part of the selection process, and most University courses also involve presentations as an assessment task.

By the end of this tutorial, you will be able to:

1. **Effectively plan** an informative and succinct presentation considering time limitations and your audience.
2. **Identify software** for creating your presentation.
3. **Create** a presentation suitable for your audience.
4. **Deliver** a presentation in an engaging way.
5. **Reference** the materials used in your presentation.

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## Planning

Planning your presentation is crucial. The more you plan your presentation, the more confidence you will have in the information you are delivering.

Before you begin writing, check the mark scheme so you know what you are being assessed on.

### Content

Your presentation should be focussed on your topic, keeping a clear idea of the message you want to convey.

This is not an opportunity to tell the audience everything you know about a topic. Being focused in a presentation is all about knowing what you need to include and what you can leave out.

### Your time limit

Your time limit is important as you will be kept to it, and you need to prepare for this.

If you are asked to deliver a short presentation, keep this in mind as you do your background research to avoid doing unnecessary amounts of reading.

### Your audience

Your audience is key. You need to consider what they already know, what you'd like them to know, and the type of language that is appropriate for your delivery.

Knowing your audience is vital in pitching your argument effectively and essential in keeping them engaged and interested.

## Presentation structure

Unlike a written piece of work, an audience only gets one chance to engage with the content of a presentation. Your presentation should follow a very simple structure of reinforcement:

1. Introduction - Outline what you will be covering.
2. Main content – Deliver your key points and arguments.
3. Conclusion – Summarise your key points and ask for questions.

Having a clear structure not only helps your audience to follow your presentation, but helps you to keep track of what it is you are trying to explain.

You can use the [Horizontal Planning Template](#) to organise your presentation. Starting in the middle with your main points will allow you to identify the main body of your message, before moving on to introduce these points to your audience and summarise them again at the end.

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## Slide design

- Select a font that is clear, simple and easy to read (WebAim, 2013).
- Use font size 20-30. This will make the text clearer and easier for your audience to read.
- Don't add too much text to each slide and choose your words carefully.
- Keep the style of your slides consistent and the background simple. This will make your slides more accessible.
- Ensure that there is a clear contrast between the text and the background so that it can be easily read. You can check this using the [WebAim Contrast Checker](#).
- Don't overuse text animations.

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## Using images

We process images faster than words which means that they can be highly effective when used in presentations. Images used in your presentation should illustrate or enhance the point you are making.

For further information on using images in your work, check out our [Discovering and Using Images](#) tutorial. This will also give you an awareness of the importance of **copyright** when looking for images.

Use charts and graphs to present your data. Visualization of data makes it more accessible and memorable. See [MASH charts and graphs support](#).

You may also consider using infographics to illustrate statistics. Check out our [Introduction to infographics](#) tutorial for more information.

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## Presentation software

There are several types of presentation software for you to choose from, each with their own **advantages** and **disadvantages**. Watch the videos below to find out about each software and

- [Presentations on PowerPoint](#)
- [Presentations on Prezi](#)
- [Presentations on Google Slides](#)
- [Presentations on Canva](#)

Follow the additional links below to access support for each product.

- [PowerPoint help and learning](#)
- [Prezi support centre](#)
- [About Google Slides](#)
- [Canva help centre](#)

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## Don't forget to reference

Referencing in a presentation is essential.

Just like in an essay you will need to use in-text citations placed directly next to any source on a slide whether **quoted**, **paraphrased** or **summarised**.

Any images used will need an **attribution statement**. Check out our [Guidance for taught course students inserting images and figures into university work](#) tutorial for more information.

You will also need to include **references** for all sources used, including images. These can be added on each slide or in a list at the end. Check out our guides on finding the [referencing style for your subject](#).

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## Preparation

The majority of your confidence will come from having a well **planned, structured** and **practiced** presentation:

- **Allow time to practice** and make sure you are fully comfortable and confident.
- **Time how long it takes** you to deliver your presentation.
- **Make sure you have your ending prepared.** Do not simply stop, think about how you will signal to your audience that you are done and ready for questions (if appropriate).
- **Build in contingency plans,** know where you can cut things out or add extra information to keep to time. Plan how you will deal with difficult questions.

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## Top tips for group presentations

Group presentations share many of the demands of individual presentations, but collaboration brings its own benefits and challenges.

Good group presentations result from taking and sharing responsibility. Effective communication within the group is key.

1. **Refer to the assessment criteria** or brief and if required divide the work equally amongst group members.
2. **Practice the presentation together,** particularly the transitions from one presenter to another to ensure the presentation flows well.
3. **Time how long it takes** you to deliver the presentation as a group.

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## Delivering your presentation

This short video offers tips and suggestions on preparing for a presentation and getting it right on the day: [301 Study Skills Hacks: Delivering a Presentation](#)

- **Write brief notes and prompts** to remind you of your key points will help you word your presentation naturally. Using the slides as your notes may tempt you to read them.
- **Consider your body language.** Smiling can help calm your nerves and create a connection with your audience.
- **Face your audience and make eye contact.** If this is daunting focus near the back of the room just above the audience's heads.
- **Speak in a clear voice** – loud enough for the people at the back of the room to hear what you are saying.

- **Talk at a natural pace** – this is usually slower than you think!
- **Use pauses to regroup** and silence to emphasise points.

## Answering questions

Your audience may want to ask you questions about your presentation. Let your audience know if you are happy to take questions during the presentation or if you would prefer to wait until the end.

- When receiving questions, **let the enquirer finish** before answering.
- **Keep calm and polite** if asked difficult questions.
- **Ask for clarification** if you need it.
- If you don't know the answer you could **offer to find out the information later** and let the enquirer know.

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## Summary

You have reached the end of this resource. This information has been adapted from the [Presentations: planning, creating & delivering tutorial](#).

Why not look at some of our other Research Skills and Critical Thinking resources? [Book onto a Workshop or take an Online Tutorial](#).

Remember to reflect on and record your skills development using [mySkills](#).

Visit our FAQs: [Library FAQs](#)

Get in touch: [library@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:library@sheffield.ac.uk)

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## References

Google Inc. (n.d.). Slides [digital image]. [Viewed 25 August 2020]. Available from <https://www.blog.google/press/>

Microsoft Inc. (©2020). PowerPoint logo. [digital image]. [Viewed 26 August 2020]. Available from: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/microsoft-365/powerpoint>

Prezi. (©2018). Prezi Logo [digital image]. [Viewed 26 August 2020]. Available from: <https://prezi.com/press/kit/>

WebAim., (2013). Fonts [Online]. WebAim. [Viewed 5 April 2018]. Available from: <https://webaim.org/techniques/fonts/>

301: Student Skills and Development Centre. Presentation Skills. [Online]. University of Sheffield. [viewed April 2018]. Available from <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/301/study-skills/communication/presentation-skills>

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## Full URLs

Horizontal Planning Template:

[https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly\\_fs/1.869363!/file/Horizontal\\_planning\\_template.pdf](https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.869363!/file/Horizontal_planning_template.pdf)

WebAim Contrast Checker: <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>

Discovering and Using Images tutorial:

[https://librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/storyline/discovering/discovering-images/story\\_html5.html](https://librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/storyline/discovering/discovering-images/story_html5.html)

MASH charts and graphs support: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/mash/statistics/graphs>

Introduction to infographics tutorial:

[https://librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/storyline/disseminating/infographics/story\\_html5.html](https://librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/storyline/disseminating/infographics/story_html5.html)

Presentations on PowerPoint: [https://digitalmedia.sheffield.ac.uk/media/1\\_k8yqrbpe](https://digitalmedia.sheffield.ac.uk/media/1_k8yqrbpe)

Presentations on Prezi: [https://digitalmedia.sheffield.ac.uk/media/1\\_otav5ump](https://digitalmedia.sheffield.ac.uk/media/1_otav5ump)

Presentations on Google Slides: [https://digitalmedia.sheffield.ac.uk/media/1\\_a0wonsir](https://digitalmedia.sheffield.ac.uk/media/1_a0wonsir)

Presentations on Canva: [https://digitalmedia.sheffield.ac.uk/media/1\\_cbnjt3d5](https://digitalmedia.sheffield.ac.uk/media/1_cbnjt3d5)

PowerPoint help and learning: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-gb/powerpoint?ui=en-us&rs=en-gb&ad=gb>

Prezi support centre: <https://support.prezi.com/hc/en-us>

About Google Slides: <https://www.google.com/slides/about/>

Canva help centre: <https://support.canva.com/>

How to attribute images tutorial:

[https://librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/storyline/discovering/discovering-images/story\\_html5.html](https://librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/storyline/discovering/discovering-images/story_html5.html)

Referencing style guides per subject: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/study/research-skills/referencing>

301 Study Skills Hacks: Delivering a Presentation:

[https://digitalmedia.sheffield.ac.uk/media/1\\_jap9phww](https://digitalmedia.sheffield.ac.uk/media/1_jap9phww)

Presentations: Plan, Create & Deliver tutorial:

[https://librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/storyline/disseminating/presentations/story\\_html5.html](https://librarydevelopment.group.shef.ac.uk/storyline/disseminating/presentations/story_html5.html)

Research Skills and Critical Thinking Webinars: Research Skills and Critical Thinking

Workshops and Tutorials: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/library/study/research-skills>



mySkills: <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/skills/myskills>

Library FAQs: <https://libraryhelp.shef.ac.uk/>

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