

Suggestions for preparing presentations

(1) Face the audience- many presenters are showing the back of their head to audience. While the back of your head may be particularly good-looking, people usually prefer to see the face of the presenter. It also helps to stand on right side of the screen (from audience) if you are right-handed, and left side of the screen if you are left-handed. In this way, you will not be showing your back to audience.

(2) The next point especially applies to people who do not have English as their native language. You need to know EXACTLY what you will be telling - write all of your talk on the slides and practice enough so that you can give the talk even if you do not see the slides. Otherwise you will have hard time finding correct English expressions under the stress of presentation.

(3) DO NOT READ FROM SLIDES! This puts audience in coma and/or sleep because they can read from slides faster than you can, and so after 30 sec they become bored and quit listening to you. If you lose listeners, they may never come back and may quit listening for the rest of your talk, which you usually do not want. This means not writing more than bullet points on slides, with max 3-4 words in each bullet point and then expanding these points verbally. Writing outlines is also counterproductive - if you switch topics then just mention this at title (1st) slide and at the point where you switch topics.

(4) Try to make transitions between slides. This is difficult and requires thinking, but in general listeners like if they kind of know what will be on the next slide before the slide is shown. This also shows that you have thought about the talk.

(5) Do not be scared. The audience is unlikely to attack you, and the only reason to be scared is if you have not prepared for the talk.

(6) Show some excitement about the topic you are presenting. After all, you chose to be chemists and go to grad school so you like chemistry (if not, quit grad school and do something else). If you give monotonous talks, your chances of getting hired will be lower.

(7) If you talk about someone else's work, be sure to have reference to their work at the bottom of the slide.

(8) Laser pointer is not a sword - do not wield it at audience! Use it only to point at slides. Also, do not overuse it.

It is EXTREMELY important to learn how to present your work well. A large portion of your professional success depends on well you are able to present/sell your research.