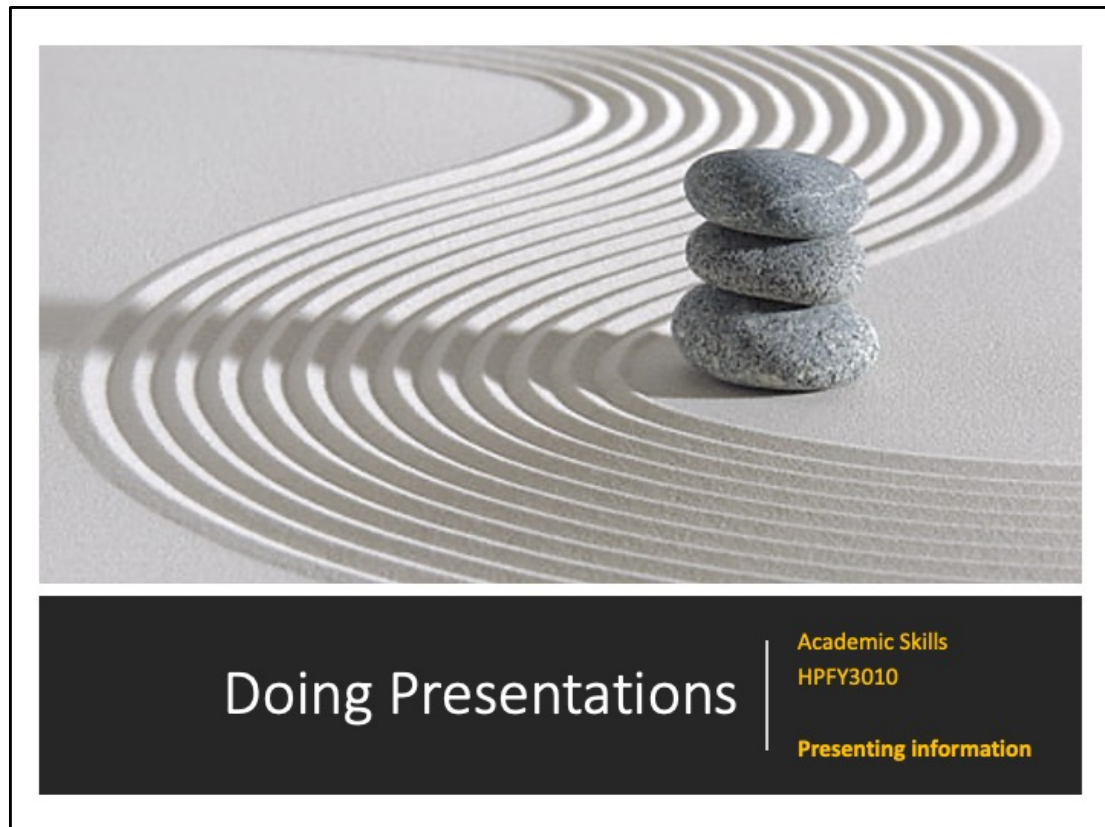




Presentations play a significant role in a number of assessment processes at many levels of study. They are also a key employability skill. This presentation offers you some tips to understand how to present effectively.

The aim of your presentation

- To send a clear, informative message confidently
- To engage your audience
- To present info accurately and memorably





The purpose of presentation software.

- PowerPoint is a tool that only *augments* what you are talking about. It is not notes for you to simply read out.
- PowerPoint slides -
 - add a visual dimension
 - to enable the audience to 'see' info
 - Use it for atmosphere/scene setting as well as spellings, dates etc

PowerPoint is a visual aid. When you use PowerPoint or similar (Keynote), make sure you are using visuals to enhance what you are attempting to communicate.

The ABC of PowerPoint presentations

- Accuracy
 - Spelling, content etc
- Brevity
 - Slides' points should be brief - *the bare minimum*
- Clarity
 - Neat, simple, uncluttered



Your slides should contain accurate information, offered briefly and clearly. It is obvious that your information should be accurate, but why should your slides be brief? This is because people tend to read the slides *before* they listen to you. If you put up lots of info to read and immediately start to talk, your audience will be conflicted about what to concentrate on. Help the audience by giving them the bare minimum to read, and some time to absorb the slide, before going over and adding detail to the points.

Remember:

Dates, names, references, citations and so on should be accurate.

Each slide should deal with one concept or one idea, only the essential details should be included in point form. Avoid the cardinal sin of too much on one slide.

Make your slides visibly obvious and clear, rather than obscure and dense. Try to avoid clutter or unnecessary info – this is a bit personal/subjective but try and keep the background simple and the font clear – Arial or Calibri are considered the best.

Tips for effective slides

- Theme your slides; consistency. Placement of text/images
- Amount of text : think T shirt
- Contrast colours background/text
- Size and clarity of font



Consistency refers to the form and general design of each slide as well as the presentation as a whole. This includes the placement of text/images, and can also be enhanced by the types of images you chose to use.

Always use copyright free images either available through the software you are using or via sites like Unsplash or Morguefile.

Tips for effective slides

- Theme your slides; consistency = calming
- Amount of text : think T shirt
- **Contrast colours background/text**
- **S**_{ize} and ***clarity*** of **FONT**



Notice the problems of this slide. As a visual aid how it is failing. Can you see some of the problems?

Poor slides

- Text written over the picture so that you can't see it



- Background colour not contrasted enough with text's colour

- Text too small

- *Font too florid*

Again, notice how visibility of the info is affected by poor choices in the design.

We have human brains

- Like order – brains seek pattern
- Organise your slides in a coherent sequence.



The order of your slides must make sense, almost like telling a story with a beginning, middle and end.

Because human brains seek out patterns to make sense of information, your slides and script will also need to have an order or pattern if the whole presentation is to make sense. Make sure that the info you are including is in a coherent sequence and avoids jumping around from topic to topic and back again.



Follow the ABC rule when you construct each slide; accuracy, brevity and clarity.

Appearance

Think about the slide's visibility. Think carefully about font size and style. Ask yourself, do you need a heading, where will you position the text. Will you use a referenced quote or bullet points?

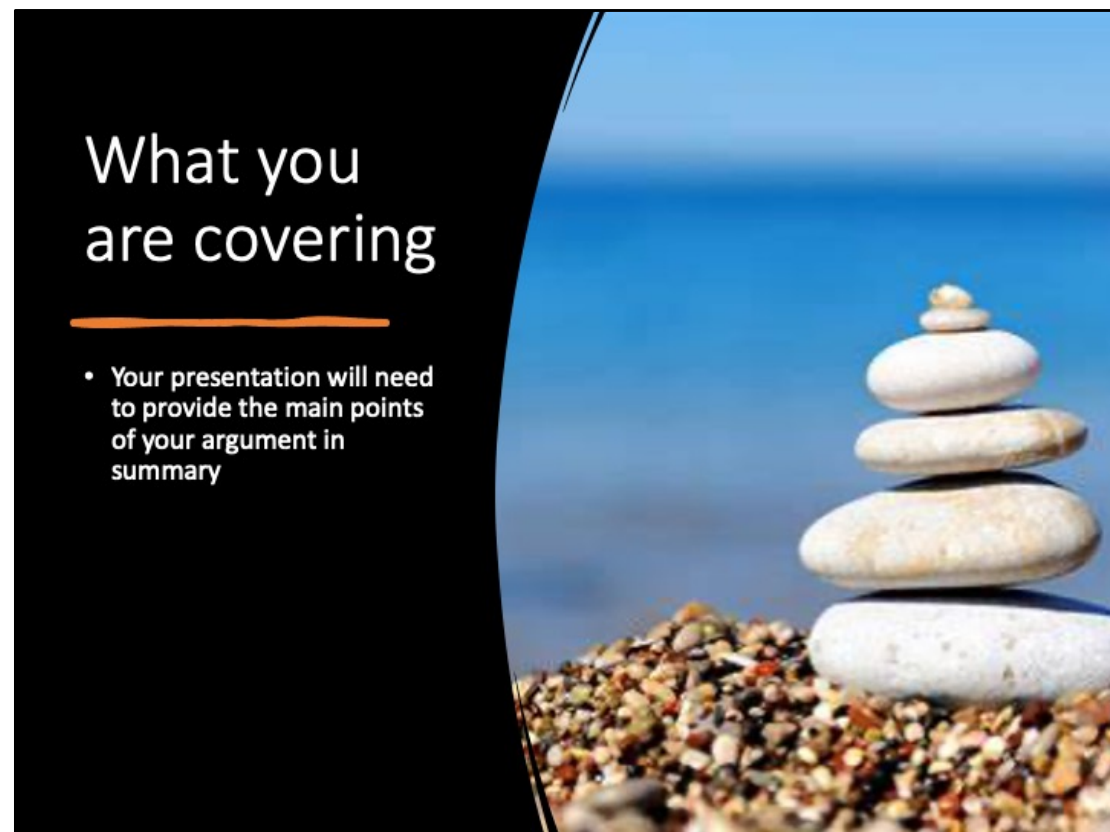
Remember about visual differences – being colour blind, for instance; remember to contrast the font colour with the background to be inclusive and to avoid excessive backlighting. A darker background with light text is preferable.

And declutter.

Structure

Presentations are quite like essays when it comes to their structure. You will need to include a title slide, intro slide, a slide of each topics or point (each one could be likened to a paragraph of an essay), concluding slide and refs' slide as necessary.

As people read faster than most can speak, design your slides to let the audience skim your bullet points as you start talking. Then go through and explain each one in turn in more detail.



For each main point, you may need to supply:

- The point itself on the slide

And then develop it verbally using your script to include information on, for example:

- The evidence that supports it
- Any scholarly issues/debates
- How you have dealt with scholarship (specifically)
- How it contributes to the overall argument



Know the equipment you are using – test it out prior to the presentation so that you don't get any shocks; know what lighting is necessary for max visibility. If you need sound, make sure you know how it works on the system you will be using – and that it is functional/working.

Rehearse the presentation to your friends or the mirror regularly - and time it. Use the 'time presentation' function. This can be found on the tool bar under 'slide show' and then 'set up'. You can also record your narration or rehearse each slide's timings using this function. **Remember time will be strictly kept and so you must ensure your presentation does not go over time.**

During your practise runs make a note of where you falter or the information 'jumps'. You may have inadvertently created a conceptual leap and need to add something that is missing. Go back and alter your presentation accordingly – don't assume people will be able to follow with a gap in the content.

Know your info because you will be asked questions about what you are saying. It is a good idea to practise saying it aloud to remember the sequence of information and to absorb the flow of your argument and the main points you are adopting. Have your notes to hand just in case you need a reminder of what you want to say, but don't rely on just reading them.

Know when to change your slides and what follows each one. The presenter view

allows you to see what slide is following the one you are on. This can be very helpful. Familiarise yourself with how to use it.
Don't be drunk or late!



Always introduce yourself but never introduce yourself as ‘rubbish’ – don’t put your work down. Just say who you are and what you are going to do.

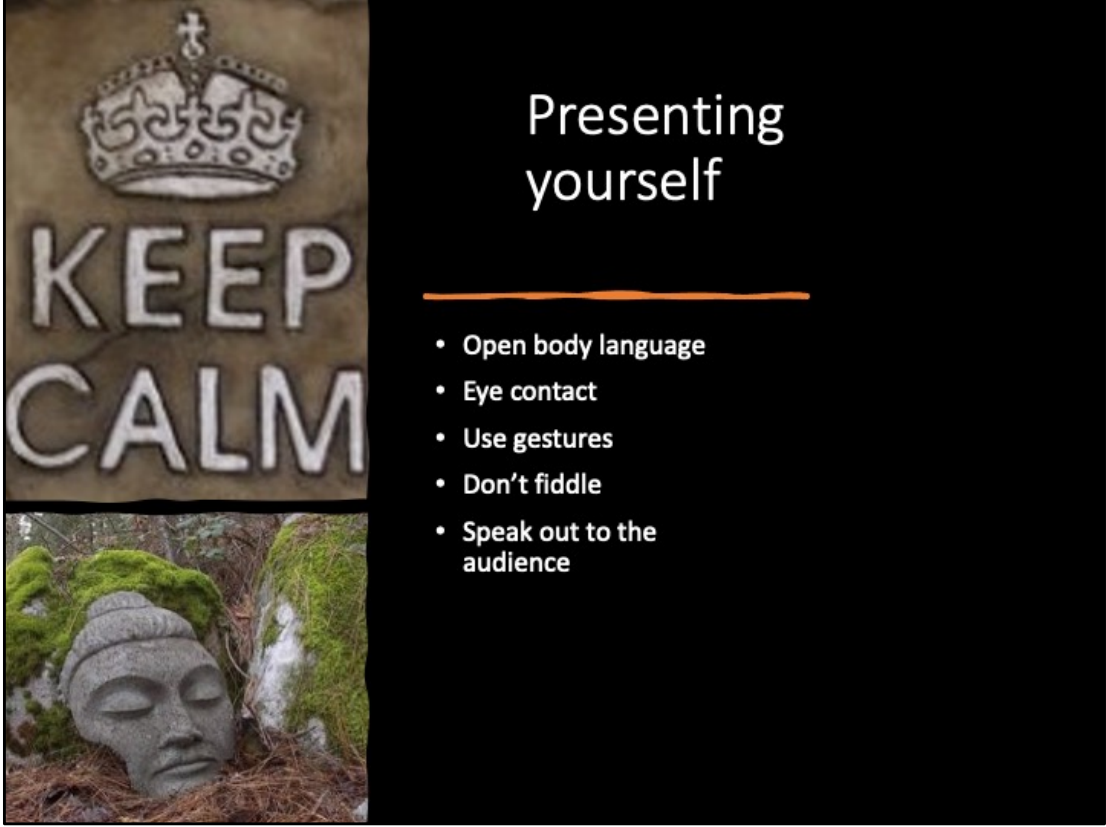
Don’t give out handouts and then expect people to listen to you. If you must provide handouts give your audience time to read them.

As people may write notes slower than most can speak, design your slides to let the audience write your bullet points before you start talking. First indicate what the slide is about. Then once the audience have had a chance to get the headings down, you can read the points on the slide in turn and give more detail about each one as you do. But don’t ONLY read the slide...there would be no point in your being there if that was all you were offering. Don’t move off the slide too quickly, give people the time they need.

If you lose your place don’t worry, we are all human. Keep calm and carry on!

Make sure your timing is right. Don’t go over time. You may be stopped and you will not receive more marks.

Always end with a ‘thank you for listening’. It’s just nice to do that. People have taken time from their lives to listen to you, the least you can do is thank them!



Presenting yourself

- Open body language
- Eye contact
- Use gestures
- Don't fiddle
- Speak out to the audience

The aim is to appear confident, even if you're not feeling so. We all get scared. Breathe. *Focus on the information* and you will lose some of your self-consciousness.

Adopt open body language that avoids being hunched. This allow all your inner organs enough space to breath and digest. Stand forward with your head up, face out and try to make eye contact even if it is to an imaginary person at the back of the room – even if you are presenting through a screen. Don't hide behind your script; show your face.

Use gestures for emphasis; point out (with a cursor) and indicate for the audience what you want them to focus on. Make them listen and look at the things you want them to.

Don't fidget, twiddle, suck your hair, bite your nails etc. It is distracting and takes attention away from what you are saying to what you are doing. If you feel worried about what to do with your arms hold a pen.

Project your voice; if you are too quiet no-one can hear you and they will get bored and likely fall asleep.

Don't hide behind your script; show your face.