

Public Presentation Techniques

How to prepare an interesting and effective public presentation

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PICKING A TOPIC

FIRST PLAN THE WORK, THEN WORK THE PLAN

- A little planning now will make the whole thing go a LOT easier later on.
- The most important part of a public presentation is picking a topic.

WHY

WHY are you excited about this topic?

WHY should your audience care about your topic?

WHY is your topic important?

WHAT

WHAT do **you** need to know about your topic? What research do you have to do?

WHAT do you want the audience to know about your topic?

WHAT is your **ONE BIG IDEA**?

WHO

WHO can help you prepare your presentation?

WHO is your audience?

WHO else might be interested in your topic?

HOW

HOW will you get your main point across?

HOW will you make your presentation clear and easy to understand?

HOW will you keep your audience interested?

- **SPEND A LOT OF THOUGHT** on picking your topic. If you are not excited about your topic, your audience won't be excited either.
- Remember, a good topic in which you are interested will make preparing for your presentation **easier** and a lot more **fun**.
- Think about your audience. Who will you be talking to? Your topic should be something tailor made for your audience.
- Make sure your audience can understand your topic and will be interested in your subject.

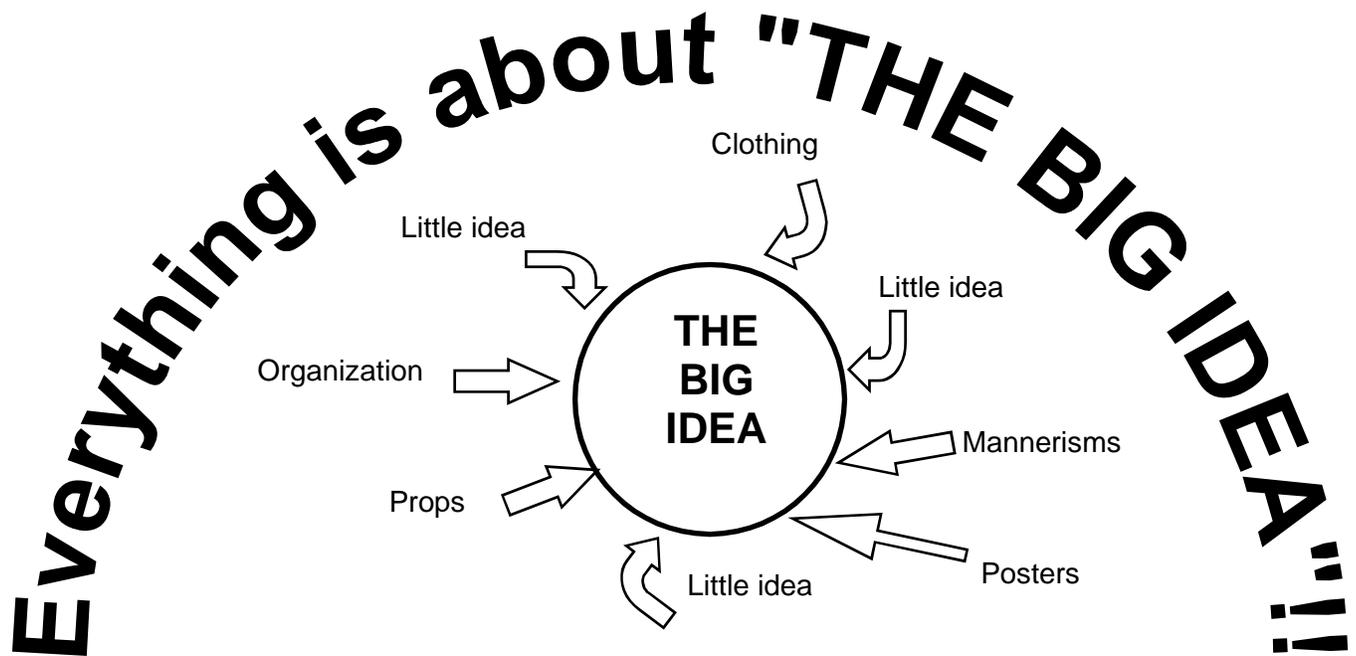
PLANNING YOUR PRESENTATION

START WITH THE END IN MIND

- What ideas do you want your audience to take away with them?
- What one thing do you want your audience to remember about your presentation?
- How will you make sure they will get **THE BIG IDEA**?

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA????

All good presentations have only ONE BIG IDEA....what's yours?



THE BEST PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS HAVE ONLY ONE BIG IDEA

- Everything in your presentation should support the ONE BIG IDEA
- If it doesn't help you get your ONE BIG IDEA across, leave it out
- Do not let your presentation distract from your ONE BIG IDEA

If you can't write your ONE BIG IDEA down in ONE SENTENCE, then you don't have ONE BIG IDEA

.....you have a bunch of little ideas and NOBODY REMEMBERS LITTLE IDEAS.

Before you begin preparing your presentation, write down your ONE BIG IDEA and keep it in front of you. Remember, you only have a little time to get your point across, so make sure it is your ONE BIG IDEA.

- Starting with the big idea will make your presentation much more effective and easier to prepare.
- Your audience will remember your presentation.
- Your presentation will be clearer and easier to understand.
- You will be less likely to get stuck and off track if you have only one major idea.

ORGANIZING YOUR PRESENTATION

ALL GOOD PRESENTATIONS HAVE ONLY THREE PARTS:

TELL 'EM WHAT YOU'RE GOING TO TELL 'EM

Introduce your topic

Why do you care about the topic

Why should your audience care about the topic?

Tell them what you will talk about

Tell them what you think they should remember about your topic

TELL 'EM

Follow your outline

Make your presentation

Remember your ONE BIG IDEA

TELL 'EM WHAT YOU TOLD 'EM

Review what you have talked about

Review the outline

Summarize your ONE BIG IDEA

Wrap it up with a brief conclusion

Give credit where credit is due

Take questions

Listen to some speeches by professional speechmakers:

- If you get C-Span, listen to the one minute speeches in the House of Representatives.
- Your teacher's classroom lectures are really only a bunch of presentations strung together. Each has one big idea and is probably organized just like shown here.
- Listen to TV programs which feature speakers...cooking shows...news programs...etc.... etc.
- You will soon notice that most of these are organized very similarly to this outline.

DON'T FORGET:

- **You only have a few minutes to make your point (I know, it seems like hours) So concentrate on your ONE....(well, you know the rest)**
- **Everything you do, say or show should support and reinforce the main idea.**
- **Leave your audience with something to remember. If they forget everything else about your presentation, they should always remember your ONE BIG IDEA**

SOME GENERAL TECHNIQUES

(In no particular order)

- Use your posters as an outline. It is OK to use index cards, but remember, index cards don't float...they're not a life preserver. Put them down on the table and only use them for reference.
- Don't read your presentation.....nothing is more boring than a presentation which is read from cards. Put key words on the index cards (if you use them) and then use your own words to present your ideas.
- Make eye contact with the audience.
- SMILE
- I know you're nervous (everybody is nervous in front of an audience), but avoid mannerisms which show it.
- Make things easy on yourself by getting rid of distractions beforehand
 - Make sure your hair doesn't get in your way.
 - Avoid jangly jewelry and clothing which can get in the way (especially for food demonstrations).
 - Make sure your posters stand up and won't fall down during your presentation.
 - Make sure your props and visual aids work.
 - Watch your grammar and speech; avoid "ahs".
 - **DON'T FORGET:** No matter how well prepared you are, something will go wrong. Not to worry, just fix the problem if it needs fixing, flash a smile at the audience and go on. The sign of a good speaker is how he or she recovers from a problem.
- Dress appropriately for the occasion. Avoid clothing and mannerisms which distract from your message.
- Speak loudly enough to be heard, even in the back of the room. (This is important.)
- **SPEAK SLOWLY AND PAUSE OFTEN. YOUR AUDIENCE NEEDS TO BE ABLE TO FOLLOW YOU. SLOW SPEECH MAKES IT EASIER FOR THEM TO UNDERSTAND YOU. FREQUENT PAUSES FOR EMPHASIS LETS THE AUDIENCE CATCH UP WITH YOU. Remember, nobody knows your topic as well as you do. Everybody needs a little time to understand what you're talking about.**
- If you have posters, use them. Use them as outlines for you and the audience, refer to them often to make a point clear or to add a point. A poster or prop that is not used by the presenter becomes a distraction to the audience. Instead of listening to you, they start to wonder why the poster is there or wonder what that gadget is that is on your table.
- **Simpler is better.....always. If it doesn't contribute something to your presentation, leave it at home. It will make your life simpler and your presentation more effective.**

- There is no requirement for you to have a lot of visual aids. One poster with good information is worth more than ten posters which don't contribute to the big idea.
- A poster with an outline of your topic and the main idea is almost always very helpful. You can use it as a guide for both you and your audience.
- Handouts can be a good thing.
- Give your references and sources. (This is a requirement for public presentations.)
- Ask for questions from the audience. (This is also a requirement for public presentations.) If you don't have the answer, don't fake it but offer to find out or refer the questioner to somebody who has the answer. "I don't know" is a perfectly acceptable answer.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

Throughout your life you will make public presentations (you'll just call them something else).

Whether you speak in front of your classroom or in front of a town board, or whether you tell a friend about a trip you took, or try to convince your Dad that you really ought to have your own horse, it's really all the same.

All good presentations have some things in common:

- Your thoughts are organized around an idea.
- You need to get a message across, make a point, persuade someone to your point of view, or describe something that's important to you.
- You have a main point to make and you support that main point with examples, smaller points, pictures, evidence or what have you.
- Your presentations have a beginning, a middle and an end. By the time you are done, the person or persons you are presenting to should have a very clear idea of what you are saying, of what is important to you and of what the other person should do next.
- A public presentation is really nothing more than a point you are trying to get across, except that you are trying to get it across to more than one person at a time.

Presentation skills are among the most important skills you will ever need. Your success in life will to a great extent depend on how well you communicate with others.

Public presentations through your 4-H Club are an excellent way to sharpen those skills which you already have, in a fun setting. I hope you take advantage of it.

WHEN THINGS GO WRONG!!!

MURPHY'S LAW

No matter how well prepared you are, no matter how good your posters are, no matter how great your topic is.....something will go wrong, and it will go wrong at the worst possible time. Although you can't always avoid trouble completely, you can prepare for it.

BEFORE PRESENTATION DAY

- Make a written check list of every item you need for your presentation and check each item off as you pack it into the car.
- Make sure ALL of your props work the way they're supposed to work.
- If something needs batteries, put in fresh ones the morning of the presentation.
- If you use audio equipment, make sure it works.
- Plan where you will put each item you need so you have it at hand when you need it.
- If you need electricity (for kitchen appliances, for example), make sure you bring extension cords.
- Make sure your posters stand up. Sometimes a piece of wood lath glued to the back of poster board helps. Foam core works better.
- If you need more than one easel to put up posters, plan on bringing it with you. There is usually one easel in the room, but there may not be more than one.
- You can expect to have a desk or table available, but for anything more than that, you will need to make your own provisions.

PREPARE

- Don't memorize your presentation. It's a sure fire way to confuse yourself if you lose your place. Besides, a memorized presentation is not very exciting. Instead.....use an outline only and use your own words for the presentation. That way, it's easier to find your place again if you've lost it.
- Try to anticipate some of the things that can go wrong and have a plan to solve the problems.
- Expect annoying stuff from the audience. Talking in the back of the room, people moving around, chairs scraping.....it's all normal stuff. If you anticipate it, it won't discombobulate you.

SIMPLIFY

- If you don't need it for your presentation, leave it at home.
- Take a critical look at your presentation. What can you take out and still have an effective presentation? You'll be surprised how much you can do without....usually for the better.
- Take a look at what you're wearing. Get rid of anything which could interfere with your presentation, such as....loose jewelry, noisy jewelry, clothing that can hang you up or trip you up. Control long hair so it won't get in your face.
- As always: KEEP IT SIMPLE.

RECOVER WHEN STUFF GOES WRONG

- First: take a deep breath, stop what you're doing and calm down. Things go wrong all the time and for everybody and nobody thinks badly of you.
- Second: take a second to figure out what you need to do next.
- Third: Flash a smile at the audience. If you want, say something to break the ice. Act as though stuff going wrong is the most normal thing in the world.....it is.
- Fourth: Fix what needs fixing. If it can't be fixed, set it aside.
- Fifth: Pick up where you left off and go on with your presentation.

THE GOOD NEWS

- Judges don't take credit off for things going awry. They know what can happen and they've probably had it happen to them.
- A good recovery from a problem is the sign of a good presenter. It shows that you have self confidence, poise and know how to act under difficult circumstances.
- Most flubs are small and can be fixed easily.
- If something so bad happens that you can't fix it right away, and you really can't continue your presentation.....ask the judges if you can try again later.
- As yourself: What's the worst that can happen? The answer probably is: Nothing so bad.

SUMMARY

- Practice your presentation until you know it so well that you can pick it up from any point.
 - Keep things as simple as possible.
 - Do whatever you can to make sure your equipment, posters and props work.
 - Expect that unexpected things will happen and practice recovering from them.
 - Keep eye contact with the audience and remember to smile.
 - A good recovery is a sign of a good speaker.
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- Remember Murphy's Law: "Whatever can go wrong, will go wrong."

PURPOSE OF A GOOD POSTER

INFORM

- Tells the audience what your presentation is about, describes your ONE BIG IDEA
- Passes on basic knowledge about your topic
- Helps keep your audience's attention

EXPLAIN

- One picture is worth a thousand words
- Explains with pictures what is hard to explain with words
- Works with your verbal presentation to help the audience understand complicated ideas

EMPHASIZE

- Emphasizes the main points of your presentation
- Helps the audience know what is important
- Helps the audience remember the main ideas

OUTLINE

- Lists the main ideas of your presentation
- Lists the main steps of a process
- Lists ingredients

GUIDE

- Helps the audience follow your presentation
- Helps you stay on track
- Prompts you if you get stuck

SUMMARIZE

- Summarizes your main points
- Helps the audience remember what your presentation was about
- Re-emphasizes the main idea

SUPPLEMENT

- Gives information you do not want to include in your verbal presentation
- Helps the audience learn more about your topic
- References and sources

POSTER TECHNIQUES

LAYOUT

- Use 8½ x 11 sheets of paper to mock up the presentation
- Use a story board
- A poster can be used this way  or this way 

GUIDELINES

- NOBODY, but **NOBODY** can letter straight and evenly without guide lines. **USE GUIDE LINES.** (Very thin pencil lines or thin lines in light blue.)
- Lay headlines out from the center.
- Set up borders and block out for pictures.

COLORS

- Use color **sparingly** and for **effect**. One or two bold colors are better than a lot of so-so colors.
- Don't use color to decorate. Don't decorate your posters, it just helps to confuse things.
- Be careful to use colors with **good contrast**. Yellow lettering on white background is really hard to read. Black on white is still the clearest. Red on white is good for emphasis.
- **BE BOLD!**
- If you use color, be consistent.
- **EXPERIMENT!** There are a lot of color combinations which work well together. Who said posters have to be white?

LETTERING

- In most cases 1" high letters should be about the smallest you use.
- Make lettering bold. FAT letters usually look better than SKINNY letters.
- Lettering takes practice, so practice on scrap paper.
- Use a straight edge or a triangle to help you letter straight.
- Watch your word and letter spacing. Don't crowd.
- It's OK to use aids:
 - Stencils
 - Rub on letters
 - Computer printed letters
 - Hand lettering with the help of straight edges.

PICTURES

- **MAKE THEM BIG.**
- Make sure that your pictures support your presentation.
- Keep them simple and clear. Remember what you are trying to show.
- **BE BOLD!**
- Don't use pictures as decoration. Use them to help you tell your story.
- Pictures don't just have to be drawings. They can be:
 - Stencils
 - Collages
 - Photographs
 - Magazine pictures
 - Sculpture
 - **EXPERIMENT!**

GOOD POSTER DESIGN

TELL A STORY

- The audience should be able to follow your presentation just by looking at your posters.
- Only the main ideas are shown. Fill in the detail in your verbal presentation.
- Steps and processes can be shown in an outline.

IMPACT

- Keep it simple and clear so that nobody can get confused.
- Show only one **BIG IDEA** per poster.
- Be **BOLD**.
- Give your audience something they will remember.

VISIBILITY

- Make sure your poster can be read and understood from 20 feet away.
- If in doubt, make it BIG.
- Be **BOLD**, not timid.
- Be careful that your choice of colors does not make things hard to see.
- Make sure your posters stand up.

CLARITY

- The fewer things on a poster, the clearer it is.
- It's better to make an extra poster than to put too many things on one poster.
- Have a stranger read and explain your poster to you. If he can't, it's time to redo the poster.
- **Less is more.** It's better to have one simple, big idea on a poster than many little ideas.
- Use color to emphasize and help make things clear, not to decorate the poster.

CONSISTENCY

- Keep lettering and colors consistent from one poster to the next.
- Don't mix styles and colors.
- Make it look like the same person did all posters.

SIMPLICITY

- **IF IN DOUBT, LEAVE IT OUT**
- Never forget the big idea.
- **USE THE KISS PRINCIPLE.** (Keep it simple, silly!)
- A simple poster is easier to understand and remember.
- Rewrite your text to use fewer words.

SPELLING AND GRAMMAR

- Incorrect spelling is a magnet to the audience's eye.
- Bad grammar confuses the reader.
- If in doubt, **LOOK IT UP.**