

Worksheet for Planning a Presentation

INSTRUCTIONS

A well-organized presentation makes it easy for your audience members to follow your thinking and absorb your ideas. When you make things easy for them, they'll be more likely to support you. Use this worksheet to plan a presentation—to think about how you want to start, what you want to include, and how to close effectively.

Opening

Your opening should be just enough to set the stage for your audience. Keep it short.

1. **Hook.** Open with a “hook” to grab your audience’s attention. Think of a personal story, a quirky fact, a pertinent quote, or a hypothetical scenario relevant to the audience—something that will make them want to hear what you have to say.
2. **Purpose.** In a single sentence, state exactly what the purpose of your presentation is. Why have you called the audience together to listen to you?
3. **Credibility.** Why should the audience trust you? What are your qualifications? Subtly let them know you have the expertise to address the subject at hand.

4. **Benefits.** In a sentence, show the audience the benefit of taking the time to listen to your presentation. What will they get out of it?

5. **Main points.** Briefly, what are the main points you plan to cover in your presentation?

Body

The structure of the body of your talk depends on your audience and the situation.

6. **Problem/solution structure.** Are you addressing a problem? If so, what is the solution you are proposing? Describe the problem in terms of the audience's everyday work, and help them visualize the benefits of the solution.

7. **Informational purpose.** Is your purpose to inform your audience; for example, to explain a new strategy or to demonstrate how something works? If so, what is it exactly that you want to convey?

8. **Mix of data and stories.** You want a good mix of data and storytelling in your talk. Listeners want facts and information. But a compelling story can bring your presentation to life. What convincing data and engaging stories might you use?

9. **Limited points.** It's better to make fewer points and make them well. Five points, plus or minus two, is the limit of important messages most adults can recall. What are your essential points? What can you leave for another time?

10. **Resistance.** You can expect some resistance to your ideas. The resistance could be logical, emotional, or practical. What resistance can you anticipate? What can you include in your presentation to deflate any opposition?

Call to action

You want to close your presentation with a strong, clear call to action—to leave your audience inspired to agree with and to support you.

11. **The action.** What do you want your listeners to believe or to do? Is there a specific action you want them to take? What would make you feel the presentation was a success?

12. **A memorable closing.** Don't end by summarizing your arguments. Rather, leave your audience with something memorable. Is there a motivating or provocative question you might ask to close your presentation?