

# ORAL PRESENTATIONS

## Overcoming nerves

- Practise, practise, practise out loud.

Everyone gets nervous when speaking in public. Some more than others, but the more you practise, the quicker you overcome the initial fear and might actually start to enjoy giving the presentation.

- Some techniques

Fake it – keep telling yourself, “I’m enjoying this”

Smile

Breathe

Think positively

Gain experience

Think of it as a conversation

Believe that you are the expert on this subject.

## Structure your presentation

- Use verbal signals

*“There are three aspects that I will discuss with you today”*

*“I’ll now give you an example for each”*

*“As I’m approaching the end of this presentation, I would like to summarise the main points I have made and then there will be 5 minutes for your questions or comments”.*

- As with an essay or report, have
  - an Introduction to create interest and give a clear idea of what the presentation will be about
  - a body, which contains examples, illustrations, evidence
  - a conclusion that sums up and/or gives the audience some further points for consideration that are beyond the scope of the time and intention of the presentation.

Overall, check that the order of the content is logical.

## Preparing for your presentation

- Dress comfortably and check yourself just before entering the room
- Be early and check the presentation equipment
- Have some water nearby
- Prepare a hand out with main points or some questions for audience to gain answers to during the presentation (this is also useful if in the unlikely event, the equipment isn’t working)
- Go through some of the overcoming nerves techniques (see above).

## Giving the presentation

- Using a power point presentation, have as little writing as possible per slide and use images – remember, you are giving the presentation. The slides add some interest and clarity, and also work to take the eyes off you
- Speak to your audience
- Make eye contact
- Have palm cards or a page with main headings, not to just read out, but to prompt you
- Look interested and enthusiastic about your topic
- Speak loud enough, slow enough, and animated enough to engage your audience
- Finally, ask for questions and comments. Even IF you don’t know the answer, keep calm and consider if the question is relevant to your presentation and if it is, then you can still answer by one of the following techniques:
  - I’ll look into that and let you know
  - An interesting point, do you have any thoughts on that or does anyone else have something they can add to this idea?

Often, the tutor will engage here.

## Remember

- Everyone is nervous at the start of their presentation – even lecturers, but the key is to be prepared, work on controlling your nerves, be interested in your topic, and know that your tutor and peers are in the same boat – just not at exactly the same time.