



Oral Communication: Giving Effective Oral Presentations





Outline



⑥ Purpose of an oral presentation





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- ⑥ Purpose of an oral presentation
- ⑥ How to structure an oral presentation



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- ⑥ Purpose of an oral presentation
- ⑥ How to structure an oral presentation
- ⑥ Giving good oral presentations

Purpose of an oral presentation

Main goals: Same as written communication

- ⑥ Communicate the results of research, data analysis
- ⑥ Inform, convince
- ⑥ Instruction

Main principles: Same as written communication

- ⑥ Accessibility
- ⑥ Logical organization
- ⑥ Clarity
- ⑥ “Tell a story”

Purpose of an oral presentation

Only harder!

- ⑥ **Time restriction**
- ⑥ **Attention span, concentration of audience**
- ⑥ **No chance to revise**

Purpose of an oral presentation

Differences from a paper:

- ⑥ Audience does not have luxury of reading references beforehand (or stopping you while they read them!)
- ⑥ Audience wants to be informed about main points – do they want to know more?
- ⑥ Interested audience members can get the full story from your paper later!

How to structure an oral presentation

A basic “recipe:” For statistical research presentations

- ⑥ Abstract
- ⑥ Title slide
- 1. Outline
- 2. Motivating example
- 3. Statistical framework
- 4. Main results
- 5. Simulation results
- 6. Example, revisited
- 7. Discussion

How to structure an oral presentation

Abstract: Same as for journal articles

- ⑥ A **brief** summary of the scope of what is to be presented, without details
- ⑥ Should give potential audience enough information to determine whether the content is of interest

Required for:

- ⑥ Presentations in academia, industry, and government, e.g. seminars, meetings with administration, public forum
- ⑥ Presentations at statistical meetings – will appear in the meeting **program**

How to structure an oral presentation

Title slide:

- ⑥ Short title, to the point
- ⑥ Your name, affiliation, e-mail/web address

1. Outline: Road map

- ⑥ Tell your audience what to expect
- ⑥ Bullets, numbers

How to structure an oral presentation

2. Motivating example:

- ⑥ **Puts the work to come in context**
- ⑥ **Defines the problem**
- ⑥ **Makes the problem accessible**
- ⑥ **Warning – give only relevant details, use only a subset of a large dataset to reduce complexity**
- ⑥ **Plots, graphs vs. tables of observations**

How to structure an oral presentation

3. Statistical framework:

- ⑥ Necessary background – but don't just quote papers
- ⑥ Set up formal models, notation
- ⑥ As few symbols as possible! (Your audience will not be able to remember a lot of notation)
- ⑥ Relate notation to motivating example

How to structure an oral presentation

4. Main results:

- ⑥ **Outline key steps; lead your audience through your reasoning**
- ⑥ **But leave out technicalities, mathematical derivations; focus on the main points**
- ⑥ **No proofs, unless the point of your presentation is to demonstrate a proof**
- ⑥ **Highlight and interpret the important results**

How to structure an oral presentation

5. Simulation results: If you show these

- ⑥ **Avoid tables of zillions of numbers**
- ⑥ **Only show an “interesting” subset of all results you have**
- ⑥ **Highlight key columns, entries with color or special type to draw attention**
- ⑥ **Graphical display of results may be easier to digest**

How to structure an oral presentation

6. Example, revisited:

- ⑥ **Remind your audience of the objective of analysis**
- ⑥ **Pictures!**
- ⑥ **Tables containing only most important results that make your point**
- ⑥ **Explain what the results mean in terms of the subject matter**

How to structure an oral presentation

7. Discussion:

- ⑥ **Restate the purpose of your presentation**
- ⑥ **Review the key findings**
- ⑥ **Discuss aspects that need further study**
- ⑥ **Software, paper availability**

Giving good oral presentations

Similar to written work: But with some differences

- ⑥ Organization and logical flow!
- ⑥ Content and accessibility
 - △ Keep things at a level your audience will be able to follow
 - △ Do not try to include everything you would in a paper

Giving good oral presentations

Delivery and clarity

- ⑥ **Speak clearly, audibly**
- ⑥ **Pace – not too fast/slow, pause slightly after “hard” parts to allow audience chance to think**
- ⑥ **Repeat difficult points more than once**

Giving good oral presentations

Visual aids (e.g. slides):

- ⑥ **Large characters, visible from afar**
- ⑥ **Avoid cluttered slides**
- ⑥ **Avoid need to define excessive notation**
- ⑥ **Sparse slides (e.g. containing just a key result or equation) may be most effective**
- ⑥ **Lots of figures, plots!**
- ⑥ **Use color or other highlighting to draw attention**
- ⑥ **Go easy on cutesy special effects**

Giving good oral presentations



Timing:

- ⑥ **How much you present depends on how much time you've got**
- ⑥ **15 minute contributed talk at a statistical meeting**
- ⑥ **45-50 minute seminar**
- ⑥ **Keep within the time limit!**
- ⑥ **If you have to rush, you're trying to say too much!**
- ⑥ ***Practice!***

Giving good oral presentations



Handouts:

- ⑥ Often a good idea (especially at preliminary oral, small research seminar, job interview)
- ⑥ Can be distracting with a big crowds (paper rustling)
- ⑥ Slides should be small but readable (e.g., 6-up) to minimize amount of paper (and hence rustling)

Giving good oral presentations

Concluding remarks:

- ⑥ A good speaking style can be **learned** – **practice!**
- ⑥ **Good visual aids are essential!**
- ⑥ **Remember, you know more about the subject of your talk than your audience (so no need to be nervous)!**