



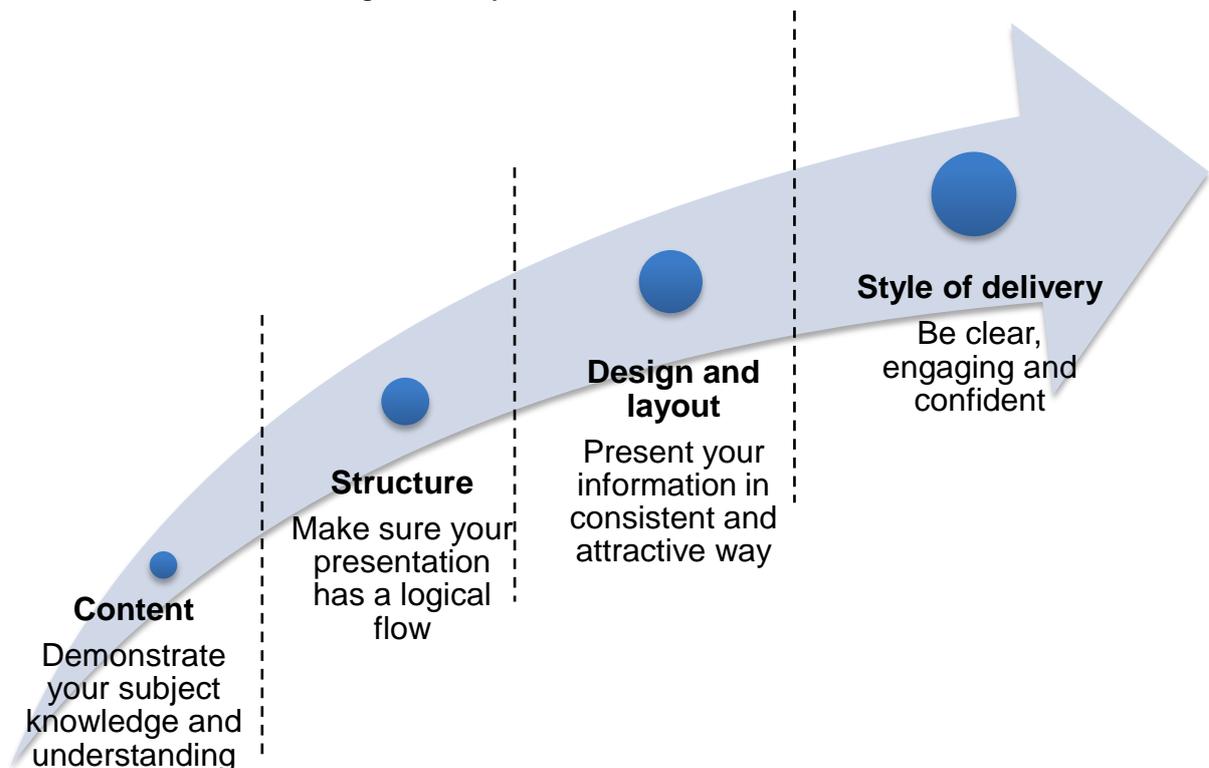
# Preparing a presentation

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## Introduction

Knowing how deliver a successful presentation is not only important at university; it is also a skill that boosts your employability.

There are **four key elements** associated with creating a good presentation. These are highlighted in the diagram below – this resource focuses on presentation content, structure and design and layout.



## Content

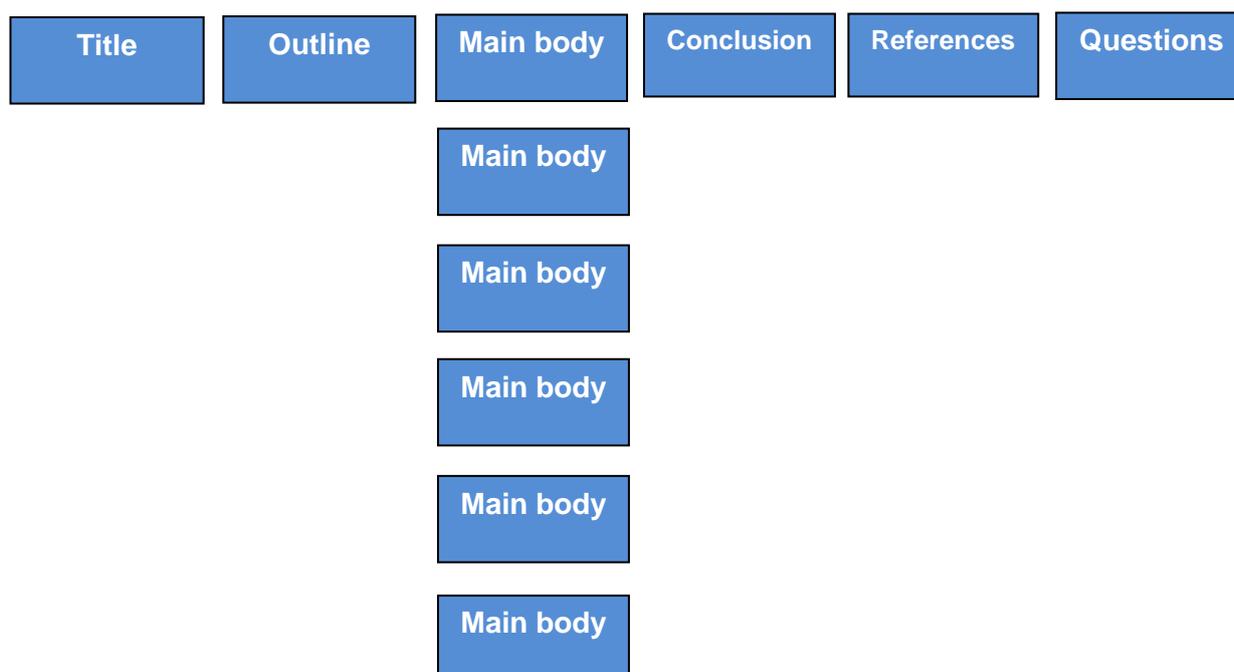
Firstly, make sure you demonstrate your understanding of the subject in your presentation. As with any assignments, the key is in reading on the subject and reflecting it in your plan and overall content. The following table provides details:

<b>Do I know the topic?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Researching a presentation should be approached in the same way as any essay or report</li><li>✓ Make sure you read around the subject and note down key issues and/or theories.</li></ul>
<b>Do I know what information to include?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Provide enough information to show you understand your topic</li><li>✓ ...but not so much that your audience is overloaded</li><li>✓ Use the length of presentation as your guide</li><li>✓ Make sure that you follow your assignment criteria.</li></ul> <p>The level of expertise of your audience will determine how much jargon and specific terminology you can use</p>

## Structure

As with other assignments, such as essays or reports, your presentation should have a logical order.

Using sections will help your audience to follow your presentation structure. The diagram below shows the typical structure for a presentation:



The following outlines what you would typically include in each part of a presentation:

<b>Title</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Includes the title of the presentation, your name and student ID</li> <li>✓ Introduces yourself, your group (if appropriate) and</li> <li>✓ States what your presentation is about</li> </ul>
<b>Outline</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Tells your audience what to expect during your presentation and....</li> <li>✓ ...in which order</li> <li>✓ Provides an overview of your presentation aims and objectives; or</li> <li>✓ An explanation of your presentation learning outcomes (for example: "...by the end of this presentation you will know about...")</li> </ul>
<b>Main body</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A main body is typically split into a number of different sections</li> <li>✓ Each section is relevant to the aims of the presentation</li> <li>✓ Tells your audience a story (has an order)</li> <li>✓ Retains the overall 'big picture' by connecting all the sections</li> <li>✓ If your presentation is part of an assessment make sure that you have answered the question that has been set</li> <li>✓ If you have been asked to analyse information, include your analysis in the main body</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Your conclusion is drawn from information that you have covered in the main body of the presentation</li> <li>✓ A good conclusion will show how the purpose of the presentation has been fulfilled</li> <li>✓ It is unlikely that any new information should appear at this point</li> </ul>
<b>References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provide references throughout the body of your presentation and</li> <li>✓ Have the reference list at the end (just like with other assignments)</li> </ul>
<b>Questions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Allocate some time at the end for the Q&amp;A</li> <li>✓ Make it clear at the start of the presentation that you will be taking questions at the end</li> <li>✓ It is a good idea to think about the type of questions that your audience may ask during preparation stage (e.g. asking a friend)</li> </ul>

## Design and layout

The design and layout of your presentation should reflect the purpose and the content of your presentation. At the same time, effective design and layout can really enhance the key messages that you wish to communicate to your audience. The resource titled 'Try it – identify what is wrong with each slide' will help you establish your level of skills in this area. Make sure your chosen style of design and layout is:

- ✓ **Simple** - use animation and graphics sparingly
- ✓ **Relevant and appropriate** – only use images, graphics and tables that support your content
- ✓ **Consistent** (colours, fonts, logos, page numbers)
- ✓ **High quality** (images, graphics and tables should be clear and easy to read)
- ✓ **Unique** (avoiding most used templates may be more memorable)
- ✓ **Ethical** (make sure you do not infringe Copyright when using images from the web)
- ✓ **Engaging** (using images, video and audio can really give you an edge!)
- ✓ Consider using **infographics** to present complex data
- ✓ **Balanced** (the amount of text, images and other types of data presentation on the slide)

## How to make a presentation run smoothly

A hassle free presentation will help to reduce any feelings of nerves or stress. The table below outlines strategies that help maximise the chance of the presentation running smoothly and to time.

<b>Section timings</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Work out approximately how long you will spend discussing each of your presentation sections</li><li>✓ The most important parts should be allocated the most time</li><li>✓ Remember that your speed of delivery and the amount of content affects the duration</li></ul>
<b>Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Practice on your own and in front of a friend</li><li>✓ If it's a group presentation practice in a group</li><li>✓ Time yourself</li><li>✓ Reduce or add content if necessary</li></ul> <p>If something does not seem to work – change it!</p>
<b>Notes / cue cards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Can serve as a helpful prompt (but a prompt only!)</li><li>✓ Should not be too long</li><li>✓ Should be readable</li><li>✓ Should not be relied on too heavily</li></ul>
<b>Back up your work</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Have two final e-copies (for example, USB and email)</li><li>✓ Have a printout of the slides even if you are not doing hand-outs</li></ul>
<b>Pre-arrange resource access</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Check that the resources you are planning to use in your presentation will be available (for example, flip charts)</li><li>✓ If not, see if you can order them in advance / bring your own</li></ul>
<b>Room set up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Arrive a few minutes early</li><li>✓ Check the room is set up for you (the screen, the chairs)</li><li>✓ Check that your presentation is working</li><li>✓ Check there are no distractions (such as noise outside)</li></ul>

## Presenter related issues

Your body language affects the way your presentation will be received. This section discusses ways in which you can ensure that you present yourself in the best light.

### Anxiety

It is common for a presenter to feel nervous in the build-up to giving a presentation. A calm, composed speaker makes an effective presenter. The table below details three strategies aimed at maintaining composure and focus:

<b>Positive thinking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Think positively and visualise yourself delivering a successful presentation</li><li>✓ This will help increase your confidence, which in turn will improve presentation quality</li></ul>
<b>Breathing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ It can therefore be very helpful to reduce anxiety through focusing on breathing in a slow and steady fashion</li></ul>
<b>Take your time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Take your time when you are speaking by pausing briefly at the end of each sentence</li></ul>

### Personal Presentation

Presenting yourself in a favourable light when giving a formal presentation will add to the overall impression. Consider the following:

<b>Use of language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Think about who is in your audience and ensure that your language is appropriate</li></ul>
<b>Body language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Face the audience whilst you are talking</li><li>✓ Maintaining eye contact with your audience will make them feel more involved</li><li>✓ Focus on individual audience members for a few seconds each</li><li>✓ Uncrossing your arms will make you look more relaxed</li></ul>
<b>Positioning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Stand to the side of the screen / projector (make sure you don't block it)</li><li>✓ Avoid walking around whilst talking</li></ul>

<b>Volume of your voice</b>	✓ Speak loudly and clearly enough for everyone in the room to hear you
<b>Dress suitably</b>	✓ If you are presenting to a group of top business people, jeans and a t-shirt are not suitable clothes to wear
<b>Organisation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Make sure that you know where all of your resources are before you start your presentation</li> <li>✓ You may appear disorganised if you start looking for things during your presentation</li> </ul>
<b>Speaking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Vary the speed at which you speak BUT</li> <li>✓ Avoid speaking too quickly</li> <li>✓ Pause at the end of each sentence for a couple of seconds - this will give your audience a chance to follow what you are saying</li> </ul>
<b>Be rested</b>	✓ Get some sleep the night before

### Further information

The Learning Resources Study Hub provides a range of opportunities (such as workshops and drop-ins) for you to enhance your academic skills. For more information visit:

**[lrweb.beds.ac.uk/studyhub](http://lrweb.beds.ac.uk/studyhub)**

