

Professor Bernstein's Top Ten Tips for Giving a Presentation

by

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1. Introduce yourself, acknowledge your coauthors, and thank your host.

Don't forget to do these. This will help you get off on the right foot.

2. Warm up your audience.

Say something interesting to capture their attention. A story or joke will do fine.

3. Communicate with your audience.

Look at your audience to get feedback from them. Look at their eyes and read their expressions. Talk to them. Communication is two-way even if you're the only one who's talking.

4. Think of your talk as a story, and be entertaining.

Describe your work as you would tell an interesting story. People like to be entertained even if it's serious research.

5. Give adequate background and motivation.

Tell them what you're doing and why you're doing it. Motivate them to care about what you're doing. Relate what you're doing to something they might care about.

6. State your main results carefully without lots of detail.

Be clear about what your results are. Minimize detail in favor of clarity. Make sure they get the main idea. They can always read your papers for the details.

7. Have uncluttered slides.

View your slides as emphasizees and reminders about what you want to say. The focus should be on what you're saying, not what the slide says. Don't be a slave to your slides. NEVER read more than a few words on a slide. The audience can read much faster than you can speak and it's annoying for them to have you read what they have already read.

8. Speak clearly, not too fast and not too slow.

Both too fast and too slow are bad. Keep their interest, but don't lose them.

9. Time your talk and select your slides in advance.

Have an idea how long your talk is. Running over is annoying to the audience. Choosing your slides in real time shows a lack of respect for the audience while they wait for you to decide what to tell them.

10. Polish your slides and your talk.

Have a polished, professional presentation.