

Feedback on activities 1 and 2:

ACTIVITY 1 Good and bad characteristics in oral presentations

Some of the key factors that determine the quality of a presentation are shown in the following table:

Characteristic	Effect on the audience	Solution
Little or no eye contact	'Hello, we are here as well!'	Make every effort to look at your audience. Look around and try not to look at just one person. If you look at one person all the time it becomes embarrassing and the new focus of attention for the audience.
Mumbling	'What is he or she talking about?' After trying to understand for a while, the audience will give up.	Practise your talk beforehand and either record it, or get a friend to listen. You need to project your voice. Always talk to the back of the room rather than those at the front.
Monotonous voice	A monotonous voice becomes a drone and the audience can't work out what is important in your talk. If this goes on for too long the members of the audience start to daydream, go to sleep or just wish they were	The message in a piece of written text is delivered via headings, sub-headings and paragraphs. Your voice has to format your text for you. You can use pitch , loudness and pauses to create effect.

	somewhere else. Avoid the EGO (Eyes Glaze Over) effect.	Use these to show movement between ideas and emphasise important points.
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Characteristic	Effect on the audience	Solution
Reading from the paper	Your audience feels bored.If you read from the paper, first you tend not to look at the audiencevery much and, second, your reading speed will be faster than free speech.	Read from cards if you feel you have to read something. Make the font large as it is difficult to read large font quickly. Also put notes on your card telling you what to do, e.g. 'look at audience', 'make reference to diagram on visual', etc.
Little or no structure	Your audience feels 'what is this all about?' Audiences are very forgiving at the beginning of a talk and usually assumeit will get better. But if after five minutes it is not clear how you are going to structure your talk, the audience will get annoyed and only have you to focus on instead of the content.	Remember: if you get lost in a book, you can flick back through the pages. You can't do that when listening to a talk,so it must provide visual and oral help to reinforce the structure. Pause between sections and speak louder at the start of a new section. See these as vocal formatting techniques.

Too much information	'Oh no, not another graph I can't read or another slide full of tightly packed bullet points.' The audience can only take very tightly packed information for a few minutes, then there is overload and it switches off.	Identify your key messages for your talk and expound them. Better to present too little rather than too much. What is the 'take home message' from your talk? Make sure the audience at least remembers that.
Bad visuals	Your audience feels annoyed. Poor graphs, small images, tightly packed text all add up to 'noise'. The audience can't read it so why use it?	If you are using graphs, create a visual of the trend for your presentation. If you want the audience to see detail, give it as a handout and talk around it.

ACTIVITY 2 Recognizing if you have performance nerves

Characteristics of performance nerves	What you can do
An overwhelming feeling of being watched	Once you engage with your audience and start looking at it, you should start to reduce this feeling. Try and think how you feel when you are having a conversation. If you don't look at people, this feeling could intensify.
Feeling that others will think you're stupid	This is a confidence issue. Make sure you practice your talk, know how to explain difficult things and be comfortable with the order and content of your slides.
Forgetting what you want to say	This is also part of a lack of confidence and something that you fear when you get stressed. If you practice, you should have the key phrases and concepts ready for use.
Losing your thread and getting muddled	This happens when you feel stressed. You need to start by feeling positive about your talk. You have practiced, you may not say everything in an ideal way, but no one will notice. If your structure is clear, you can't get muddled.