

SKILL: Giving an oral presentation

Giving an **oral presentation** is an important skill in school and in real life. A successful presentation is a combination of talking to an audience and showing pre-prepared visual aids on an overhead projector, on a flip chart or by means of a computer and beamer. It also demands a good command of the language and the ability to catch the listeners' attention to get the subject across. In school there are plenty of occasions for presenting individual or group work, e.g. talking about an important author, giving a book review, a synopsis of a drama or novel or speaking about a controversial topic.

1. Finding and coping with information

- Define your topic by deciding what exactly you want to talk about.
- Look for texts from different sources: dictionaries / encyclopedias / fictional texts / newspapers / magazines / the Internet.
- Decide which of the texts in your collection will yield the best or most useful and interesting information.
- Examine the point of view of your source of information. Decide how reliable, valid, objective or useful the information is for your presentation. If you decide that the writer is not objective or neutral, you can still use the text, but the information should be integrated into your own presentation using words of caution such as: *according to - from the speaker's / narrator's / writer's point of view - apparently - it seems to be the case that... - possibly - we cannot be quite certain, but... - there is evidence that...*
- Scan your texts for relevant information and make notes, preferably in the form of a (structured) mind-map or flow diagram.
- Reduce the information to those items that will explain the situation most clearly to your listeners, who will probably not have read the same texts as you.
- Write down the structure of your presentation on index cards (= Karteikarten) rather than sheets of paper.
- Present only information which you have fully understood yourself.

2. Preparing for a presentation

- Make sure you know what the conditions for your presentation are, e.g.:
 - the allotted time
 - the type of equipment available: board / overhead projector (OHP) / video recorder (VCR) / cassette or CD player
 - seating arrangements and classroom set-up.
- Practise your presentation beforehand.
- If you present your material as a team, make sure each team member knows his or her role.

3. Giving a presentation

- Give your audience an introduction in which you tell them what the presentation is about (e.g. the exact topic of your talk, the aspects you propose to deal with).
- Give your audience visual material as well, e.g. transparencies with key words, diagrams or photographs, handouts with a structured layout of your talk.
- Speak clearly, making short pauses from time to time to let information sink in or to make it clear that a new aspect is coming up.
- Keep eye contact with the audience. Do not keep your eyes glued to your notes -just refer to them from time to time to make sure you are keeping to your prepared plan. Never just read directly from a written text.
- Give a conclusion at the end of your talk.
- Thank your audience for listening.

Evaluating a presentation

Evaluating a presentation is a useful way of getting or giving **feedback** that comprises different aspects, e.g. the speaker's clarity of presentation, his/her abilities to communicate effectively and the listeners' reactions. Together with oral feedback from your listeners an evaluation sheet has proved to be very helpful. In addition it also may serve as a kind of checklist for further presentations.

Evaluation sheet	+	o	-
1. Do you feel adequately informed on the subject that was presented?			
2. Could you follow the presentation without problems?			
3. Did you recognize a logical structure in the speaker's subject matter?			
4. Did the speaker use examples and repetition to make difficult points easier to understand?			
5. Did he/she succeed in maintaining your attention during the presentation?			
6. Did you feel to be involved in the presentation?			
7. Was the language of the presentation adequate?			
8. Did the speaker explain difficult or special words and expressions?			
9. Did he/she speak clearly and loudly enough?			
10. How did the speaker handle his/her visual aids and the technical equipment?			
11. Were the visual aids meaningful and did they support the speaker's points?			
12. Were the visual aids clearly structured and legible?			
13. Did the speaker keep eye contact with his/her audience?			
14. How would you evaluate his/her body language?			

- + very good, successful
- o OK, but needs to be improved
- bad, not successful