Presentation and Public Speaking Activities

Professional Communications OER: Presentations

# Context for Use (for instructors)

You may use the formative activities listed in this document to support the primary summative assessment for the *Presenting in a Professional Context* module. We assume that not all of the suggested activities will fit the specific contexts of every class; therefore, as the instructor, you are encouraged to pick and choose activities based on the time available, the context (face-to-face, blended, online), and if you will also use the student learning journal. Relevant content for the activities is available in the eText.

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**Note: In this document activities have been grouped by eText chapter, content, and topics and may appear in different places than in the lecture notes.**

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# Your Presentation Style

## Speaking and Listening in Different Environments and Contexts CC-BY-NC-ND, LN

Discuss the following in small groups. How do your listening behaviours change in the following situations:

* At a concert
* In class
* At the dinner table with your parents
* In a doctor’s office

What are the distractions and other barriers to listening you might encounter in each setting? What might you do to overcome the barriers to effective listening in each situation?

**Extension Questions and Settings:** Second, how do your speaking behaviours change in the following situations?

What verbal cues might you give to demonstrate you are actively trying to listen? What non-verbal cues might you give to demonstrate you are actively trying to listen?

Additional settings:

* At a movie
* Walking along a busy downtown street with a friend
* In a classroom during small-group discussion
* In a classroom during large-group discussion
* In a classroom during lecture
* At the dinner table in an open concept restaurant

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## Effective Listening and Barriers to Understanding LN

(paired with journal reflections)

Instructors: Read the scenario below to the students and ask a question at the end. After the students have responded (or not!) lead a discussion on the three A’s of active listening (Attention, Attitude, and Adjustment) as well as the three main, non-environmental, barriers to effective listening (Anticipating, Judging, Reacting Emotionally).This discussion may take up to about 20 minutes.

**Read aloud to class:** A Greyhound bus leaves Lethbridge at 7:45 AM Tuesday morning with 5 passengers. It arrives in High River at 9:15 AM and picks up another 4 passengers. Next, it arrives in Okotoks at 9:45 AM, drops off 2 passengers, and picks up 3 more. It arrives in Calgary at 10:30 AM and drops off 3 passengers and picks up 8 more. The bus arrives in Airdrie at 11:15 AM, and no passengers get on or off. Next, it arrives in Red Deer at 12:30 PM and picks up 10 passengers. Next, it arrives in Edmonton at 2:30 PM and drops off 6 passengers. Finally, the bus reaches Athabasca at 4:30 PM, where all remaining passengers get off.

**QUESTION:** How many stops did the bus make?

## That’s Not What You Said

(paired with journal reflection)

In the Foundations module we had an activity called “[That’s Not What You Said](https://docs.google.com/document/d/10eCVlIjG9fa4wR54TeUIXaZ8BrkN8o98u12Ry6PzcQs/edit#heading=h.2rpmfidby8v6).” If the activity has not been used yet, it would be useful here as well, as it addresses both verbal and non-verbal communication techniques.

## Listening Distractions

In this pyramiding discussion, students will have the opportunity to discuss what distracts them while attempting to listen to a speaker, as well as strategies to overcome these challenges.

1. Students begin by writing down what they believe distracts them from listening attentively to a speaker (1‒2 minutes).
2. Students form pairs and share their lists. They may choose to include items from their partner’s list. After reviewing each other’s lists, students should then suggest filters and/or strategies for their partner to overcome the distractions. (2‒3 minutes)
3. The pairs form groups of four and repeat step 2. (3‒5 minutes)
4. The entire class should then engage in a large group discussion, highlighting as many distractions and filters as came up in the exercise. Students are encouraged to take detailed notes. (10‒15 minutes)

## Non-Verbal Aspects of Delivery CC-BY-NC-ND, LN

Instructors: Divide your class into groups of two or three and provide one person in each pair or group with *Try This! Gestures*. Provide students 5‒10 minutes to act out the gestures, while their partner(s) attempt to guess what the first student is trying to communicate. Think charades. The students who are guessing may say, “I give up,” at which time the actor will tell them what they were trying to communicate before moving onto the second message. At the end of the time limit, guide a large group discussion. Were the students ables to guess the message? Why or why not?

You can use the same activity format for *Try This! Facial Expressions.*

**Try This! Gestures**

Using only your hands, convey the following:

1. “It’s OK.”

2. “I give up.”

3. “He’s crazy.”

4. “We will be victorious.”

**Try This! Facial Expressions**

Try to express these thoughts without words:

1. “I am thrilled that I am getting a raise.”

2. “I am worried about tomorrow.”

3. “Lemons are too sour for me.”

4. “I am suspicious about what he did.”

## JOHARI Window Feedback & Reflection Exercise LN

(paired with journal reflections)

This exercise is intended to increase students’ self-awareness by comparing and contrasting their own descriptions of their personality with those solicited for feedback.

* Download the [JOHARI Window Worksheet](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HJ-RiUiTYz2pnkKQwkiHFO3vrqEVIdE_9WA83TECVig/edit#heading=h.xz3s3mno1h4a), and review the list of adjectives. Select 5 or 6 adjectives you would use to best describe your own personality. You can temporarily copy and paste these into the *Hidden Self* cell.
* Print out at least 3 copies of the *Adjective List* from the [JOHARI Window Worksheet](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1HJ-RiUiTYz2pnkKQwkiHFO3vrqEVIdE_9WA83TECVig/edit#heading=h.xz3s3mno1h4a), and give a copy people you work with (either in formal employment, in volunteer settings, or classmates) that you can trust to give honest yet supportive feedback. Ask each person to select 5 or 6 adjectives they believe best describe your personality.
  + NOTE: Make sure they do not see the adjectives you chose for yourself.
* When you receive the lists of adjectives from those you asked for feedback copy and paste them into the *Blind Self* cell.
* Review the adjectives in both the *Blind Self* and *Hidden Self* cells. Move any adjectives that appear in both of those cells into the *Open Self* cell.
* Any adjectives that are not present in any cell can be moved from the adjective list into the *Unknown Self* cell.

**Instructors:** You may choose to have a large-group discussion to discuss the outcomes of the exercise (alternatively, this could be done in the *Presentation and Public Speaking Journal*) and ask students questions such as the following:

* Who did you ask for feedback and why?
* Did any adjectives appear in the *Open Self* or *Blind self* cells that surprised you?
* Are there items in the *Hidden Self* cell that you had hoped would appear in the *Open Self* cell or vice versa?
* Are there items in the *Blind Self* cell that you are happy with? Unhappy with?
* Now that you are aware of the adjectives that both you and others would use to describe your personality, how might these perceptions affect your relationship with the audience during a presentation?
* If there are items you wish to move from the *Hidden Self* cell to the *Open Self* cell, or items you are unhappy with in the *Blind Self*, brainstorm some strategies for improvement, including activities, timelines, and ways to find out if you are making progress.

# Developing a Presentation Strategy

## Reverse Outlining CC-BY-NC-ND

During a classmate’s speech, pay special attention to the organization style that he or she employs. As they give their speech, try to construct an outline based on what you hear. If your classmate has followed many of the suggestions provided in this and other chapters, you should be able to identify and replicate the structure of the speech. Compare your “reverse” outline with the speaking outline. Discuss any areas of discrepancy.

**Note:** This activity can be paired effectively with the final presentation assignment. It provides an opportunity for students to obtain feedback during the development of their presentation and enhance their final product.

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## Topic Proposal Workshop CC-BY-NC-ND

Often, selecting a topic can be one of the most challenging steps in developing a speech for your class. Prior to class, review the textbox “Questions for selecting a topic” below. Answer these questions and choose a tentative topic. Write up a short paragraph about your topic that describes its importance, why it interests you, and what you would like to convey to an audience about your proposed topic. In class, meet with two or three additional students to discuss and workshop each of your topics. As you discuss your topic with others, jot down what questions they had, what aspects they seemed to find most interesting, and any suggestions your peers might have. Once the workshop is complete, proceed with narrowing your topic to something manageable.

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| Questions for Selecting a Topic What important events are occurring locally, nationally, and internationally?  What do I care about most?  Is there someone or something I can advocate for?  What makes me angry/happy?  What beliefs/attitudes do I want to share?  Is there some information the audience needs to know? |

# Presentation Aids

## Making Charts and Graphs (online/blended online/LMS) LN

Instructors: You may copy and paste the following instructions into your course site for students to refer to when completing this task.

* Search the Internet for data on a topic of your choice.
  + Some suggestions are population growth, use of social media by age group, average income, and home prices, etc.
* Use the data you have collected to design 3 **different** types of charts or graphs to effectively communicate this data. These charts could be presented as stand-alone images or be embedded into a slide show.
* Complete part 1 of the journal entry for *Making Charts and Graphs.*
* Post the link to the data and your three charts or graphs to the course site.
* Review the data and charts of at least two of your peers and write a reply to each one, answering the question, “Which chart or graph did you think was most effective? Why?”
* **Post your data and charts before (instructor set date).**
* **Post two replies before (instructor set date).**
* Complete part 2 of the journal entry for *Making Charts and Graphs*.

## Leveraging Visual Aids Exercise

As you have learned, visual aids can be a powerful and compelling tool set in the delivery a quality presentations. The key is to develop these aids in a way that communicates or adds understanding to key points of your topic in the presentation. They should not be used to glamourize nor should they detract from your presentation.

With this in mind, complete this exercise to see if you can leverage visual aids and/or other props to focus on adding meaning to a presentation.

* Choose a topic. This can be anything and need not be complicated. Actually, the simpler the better.
* Prepare a short introduction or summary of your topic. Basically, the main point(s) or your objective.
* Now, rather than compile scripts or notes on what you would say in this presentation, focus on creating only those visual aids that will illustrate the topic’s main points. In other words, they need to say visually what you would say orally.
* Using only your visual aids, deliver your presentation to an audience without using words. Use a slide or something similar to display the introduction.
* After your presentation, debrief with the audience and note how effective your visual aids were in conveying your message. Did they do the job? Did the audience get the point clearly? Were the visuals eye-catching, and if so, did they also get your meaning across?
* Review the feedback and fine tune the visuals as necessary. Remember that visual aids need to add value to your presentation, not take away from it, or take the place of you in it.

# Communicating with a Live Audience

## Speech to Introduce a Classmate: A Pre-Speech Activity CC-BY

Students are divided into pairs by chance–perhaps by drawing pennies out of a cup after each coin has been labelled by a student with his/her name in indelible ink–and interview each other using a form provided by the instructor. The pairs then introduce each other to the rest of the class. If time permits, this activity can begin on the second or third day of class. To keep the atmosphere comfortable and unthreatening, you may refrain from assigning any particular length for the speech and refrain from asking the students to remove hats or otherwise alter their appearance to enhance their professionalism. This is basically an ice-breaking, getting-to-know-you activity.

This activity may be followed by students writing an entry in their *Presentation and Public Speaking Journal*.

## Speech of Self-Introduction CC-BY

**Purpose:** The Speech of Self-Introduction is a chance for students to develop ethos or credibility when giving a short introductory speech about themselves. People frequently have to introduce themselves before a group. The speech developed as a result of this assignment is one students should keep and develop for specific situations later on in life. It is useful for job or scholarship interviews, an organization meeting where they are new, or even the first day of class. Students will want to isolate a few aspects of their life, personality, or beliefs that reflect favourably on them. This is often called impression management. In order to manage the impressions they make, students will want to convey competence, integrity, attractiveness (likable, easy to identify with), and natural or conferred power.

**General directions for delivery:**

* Deliver the speech when assigned in class.
* 3–5 minutes. Time the speech for 4 minutes.
* Limit notes to 3 note cards with keywords only. No written speeches are allowed. No reading or heavy note use is allowed. The speaking style should be extemporaneous.
* No sources are needed for this speech.
* Focus on creating an effective introduction, body, and conclusion.
* Avoid selecting topics that require a significant amount of setup time, numerous objects or props, or extensive room rearrangement.

**Suggested Themes and/or Topics**

The Speech of Self-Introduction requires a general theme or purpose. The student should consider some of the following question areas for developing the speech. A “scatter shot” approach of discussing them all is not recommended. Students may wish to reflect on the following:

* Geographic locations: Have you been shaped by where you grew up or by your culture?
* Important people: Who has made a great impact on you?
* Experience: Has some unique experience shaped your life?
* Activities: Do you enjoy an activity or hobby that is meaningful?
* Career or work: Are you largely defined by what you do for an occupation?
* Values: Do you have some values that are important in your life?
* Goals: Do you an overwhelming purpose in your life that defines what you do?

The speaker needs to make certain that an effective introduction and conclusion have been developed. The Speech of Self-Introduction should begin with an introduction that introduces the speech, not list the speaker’s biographical information. The conclusion should summarize the speech, not just bring general biographical information to an end.

## Table Topics (Impromptu Speech)

In this activity students will be challenged to come up with a brief 1‒2 minute speech on a topic of their choice or as assigned by the instructor (more details below). After topics have been selected, students will have no more than 5 minutes to research, outline, and/or rehearse their impromptu speech. No visuals are necessary. Through this activity students will have to quickly identify the purpose of their speech, 3 main points for the body of their speech, an introduction delivery strategy, and how to conclude their speech without the opportunity to prepare thoroughly. This activity should help students focus on the fundamentals of speech development in a low risk environment.

A sample list of speech topics has been provided, but it is neither exhaustive nor meant to be limiting.

**Method 1 - Impromptu Speech**

Students may select their topics from the list, brainstorm their own (mind the time limit, though!), or the instructor may assign topics to students. After the students have had 5 minutes to develop their impromptu speeches, they should put all writing utensils away and can present their speeches one at a time to the whole class. The instructor may wish to have students use [this rubric](https://docs.google.com/document/d/16eRM7_2Jfd9RP9YIaYPhISRNsB5NW0a1cSgjuWDBpSc/edit) for peer feedback. This method works best with smaller class sizes.

This can be followed by a large group discussion that addresses the topics of planning, rehearsal, and speaker anxiety leading up to and during a presentation.

**Method 2 - Table Topics**

The instructor divides the class into separate tables, or groups, of equal size and assigns one impromptu speech topic to each table. Each student in the group will develop their own speech on the topic (remember, in just 5 minutes). Students then present their impromptu speech to their own group, one by one. The instructor may wish to have students use [this rubric](https://docs.google.com/document/d/16eRM7_2Jfd9RP9YIaYPhISRNsB5NW0a1cSgjuWDBpSc/edit) for peer feedback. This method works best with larger class sizes.

This can be followed by a large group discussion that addresses the topics of planning, rehearsal, and speaker anxiety leading up to and during a presentation. It is also an opportune moment to discuss the differences and similarities the students observed between each of their speeches.

**Method 3 - Table Topic JigSaw**

The instructor divides the class into separate tables, or groups, of equal size and assigns one impromptu speech topic to each table. It is important for the instructor to have the same number of students per table as there are tables (i.e., 4 groups of 4, 5 groups of 5, etc.) for this method. to Each student in the group will develop their own speech on the topic (remember, in just 5 minutes). Students then present their impromptu speech to their own group, one by one. The instructor may wish to have students use [this rubric](https://docs.google.com/document/d/16eRM7_2Jfd9RP9YIaYPhISRNsB5NW0a1cSgjuWDBpSc/edit) for peer feedback. This method works best with larger class sizes.

This can be followed by a large group discussion that addresses the topics of planning, rehearsal, and speaker anxiety leading up to and during a presentation. It is also an opportune moment to discuss the differences and similarities the students observed between each of their speeches.

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| Sample List of Impromptu Speech Topics  * Junk food’s popularity relies on marketing. * The more we communicate, the less we really say. * The most important lesson of my life so far… * Colour affects the way people feel. * *Discipline* is not a dirty word. * What and who is an average person? * Being young is overrated. * In what situation is lying a good idea? * Does money make the world go round? * What human quality do we need more of and why? * Who has been the most influential person in your life and why? * How we look is unimportant. It’s who we are on the inside that counts. * Talking to someone and talking with someone are two different activities. * What would you rather be—wise or intelligent? * What would you rather be—rich or famous? * Cities are for people, not cars. * Children should watch less/no television. (Alternatively, less/no tablet, computer, or smartphone time.) * Should smoking be allowed in public spaces? * Review the last movie you saw. |

## Practicing Delivery CC-BY-NC-ND, LN

Instructors: The following are three exercises students may use to practise specific aspects of their verbal public speaking skills, with low risk. The exercises could be completed as: a whole class in a large group discussion and presentation format; a series of stations where groups of 5–8 students move through the stations completing the tasks as small groups; a *choose-one* exercise to complete and have students self-group; or any other arrangement that meets your instructional context. It is recommended that these activities be paired with a student entry in their *Presentation and Public Speaking Journal*. The instructions below can be given to the students.

* **Practice Inflection:** Gather some children’s books (aimed at ages 6–10) and read them aloud in class. Practise the use of inflection to indicate the punctuation, the energy, and the characters. Do not be afraid to seem foolish. Remember that this is how most children learn to read and speak.
* **Pronunciation:** Bring in several books or publications of a variety of types and disciplines. Scan through the text and find words that are unusual. Look them up in an online dictionary and see how they are pronounced. This could be turned into a game of “stump the speaker,” guessing how each word is pronounced. It can also be used to point out some simple yet often mispronounced words.
* **Projection:** Stand in as large a circle as possible. Each person has a partner across the room. Partners introduce each other and carry a conversation over the noise of others doing the same thing. Do not shout. Keep it going for a few minutes (it will be loud), then quiz the partners about the conversation they had.

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## Lightning Presentation

(For any of the suggested “mini-speeches” above)\*\*

Divide the class into pairs. Each pair will need access to a computer. Decide which tool you want the students to use (PowerPoint, Google Slides, Prezi, etc.) or leave it open for them to decide. The aim of this activity is twofold: first, for students to get experience in creating slide decks and visuals to accompany a presentation, and, second, for them to practice speaking using visual aids and getting their points across in a short time. When these presentations are delivered, teachers will need to be fairly strict about having the slides advance every 20 seconds. Encourage the students to rehearse beforehand so that they know they can deliver inside of the allotted time.

In pairs, students design a presentation on a topic of their choice. You may have 20 slides in total, and each slide may run for 20 seconds each. Your talk will run for 4 minutes. What can you tell us about in that time?

## Recording and Self-Critiquing a Speech

(For any of the suggested “mini-speeches” above)\*\*

* For “What Are My Verbal Communication Techniques,” record a piece to camera and then fill out a questionnaire/write about your own style of the items we identify in the text (pitch, volume, emphasis, pronunciation, fillers, rate). Could also cover non-verbal techniques (gestures, facial expression, posture, silence, movement).

# Attribution Statement (In-Class Activities)

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## Your Presentation Style Activities:

* Original activities contributed by the Olds College OER Development Team, of Olds College to Professional Communications Open Curriculum
* Chapter 4 Review Questions and Activities. Authored by: Jenn Q. Goddu, M.A.. Provided by: Queens University of Charlotte, Charlotte, NC. Located at: http://publicspeakingproject.org/psvirtualtext.html. Project: The Public Speaking Project. License: [CC BY-NC-ND: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)
* Chapter 12 Nonverbal Aspects of Delivery. Authored by: Victor Capecce, M.F.A.. Provided by: Millersville University, Millersville, PA. Located at: http://publicspeakingproject.org/psvirtualtext.html. Project: The Public Speaking Project. License: [CC BY-NC-ND: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

## Developing a Presentation Strategy Activities:

* Original activities contributed by the Olds College OER Development Team, of Olds College to Professional Communications Open Curriculum
* Questions for Selecting a Topic and Reverse Outlining in Chapter 8 The Topic, Purpose, and Thesis. Authored by: Joshua Trey Barnett. Provided by: University of Indiana, Bloomington, IN. Located at: <http://publicspeakingproject.org/psvirtualtext.html>. Project: The Public Speaking Project. License: [CC BY-NC-ND: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)

## Presentation Aids Activities:

* Original activities contributed by the Olds College OER Development Team, of Olds College to Professional Communications Open Curriculum

## Communicating with a Live Audience Activities:

* Original activities contributed by the Olds College OER Development Team, of Olds College to Professional Communications Open Curriculum
* Speech to Introduce a Classmate. Authored by: Phil Vendetti. Located at: <http://opencourselibrary.org/cmst-220-public-speaking/>. Project: Washington Open Course Library. License: CC BY: Attribution <https://courses.candelalearning.com/publicspeaking1xmaster/chapter/sample-assessment-speech-to-introduce-a-classmate/>
* Speech of Self Introduction. Authored by: Brent Adrian. Provided by: Central Community College, Nebraska. License: CC BY: Attribution shared at candela <https://courses.candelalearning.com/publicspeaking1xmaster/chapter/sample-assessment-speech-of-self-introduction/>
* Chapter 12 Review Questions and Activities. Authored by: Victor Capecce, M.F.A.. Provided by: Millersville University, Millersville, PA. Located at: http://publicspeakingproject.org/psvirtualtext.html. Project: The Public Speaking Project. License: CC BY-NC-ND: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives http://www.publicspeakingproject.org/PDF%20Files/delivery%20web%201.pdf

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