



Course Title: Business Communication

Preparing a Presentation

1

Step 1

Think about the context of the presentation: who are the audience, and what are their interests? How big will the audience be? How long is the presentation to be? What equipment is available for visual aids? What about time for questions?

2

Step 2

Decide on your topic. Think carefully about the main point or points that you want to communicate. You should be able to write these clearly in one or two sentences.

3

Step 3

Structure the content. Most people begin with an unordered collection of ideas, and then put them into sequence. Then decide on the relative weight of each section of the talk.

4

Step 4

Think of ways of catching the listeners' interest: examples, anecdotes, impressive statistics, interesting quotations.

5

Step 5

It is useful to 'rough-draft' visual aids at this stage, because they can help you make the sequence of points more clear and logical. Think about whether some information should be put into handouts.

6

Step 6

Check overall length, and the relative weight of sections. A little too short is better than even a little too long. As a rough guide, allow about one minute for every 100 words, plus time if necessary for changing transparencies. One A4 page, double-spaced, takes about 3 minutes of speaking time.

7

Step 7

Finish preparation of visual aids. If you are using PowerPoint data projection, slides on transparency are a useful back-up in case of last-minute technical problems.

8

Step 8

Prepare handouts, if you want them. Make copies.

9

Step 9

Plan the exact words you will use for the opening, the transition points, and the conclusion. Practise them again and again. If you are anxious, write on cards the introductory and concluding sentences. Make more notes if you need them

10

Step 10

REHEARSE your presentation, as often as necessary. Do not omit this step! You can practice alone, or ask a friend or colleagues to listen to you. With practice, you will become more fluent and at ease. Make sure you speak simply, but in academic not conversational style. Project your voice across the room. You will find this slows your speech. Check the timing carefully and make adjustments if necessary. Mark a time reference at one or two points in the presentation.

11

Step 11

Think about the questions the audience may want to ask you. Plan how you will answer them.

12

Step 12

On the day of your presentation, be calm and organized. If you are unfamiliar with the location, go beforehand to plan where you will stand and where you will put your papers, and to see how the projection works. Arrive in good time for your presentation. Remember to take all your visual aids, notes and papers!

Visual aids

- Before your presentation, check that the equipment works.
- If possible, set up your presentation before your talk. This can take several minutes, even if all goes well.
- Decide on the best place to stand, so that you do not obscure the view of the audience.
- Even if you are giving your presentation in a well-equipped room, technology can go wrong. Print out your PowerPoint slides on to transparencies, so that you have an alternative.

Handouts

- To show data that are too detailed for a visual aid, such as transcript, data from interviews, or mathematical calculations. If there is a lot of detail, the points you want to refer to in your presentation should be clearly highlighted in the handout. The handout is given immediately before the presentation, and then referred to.
- To provide a "signposting" framework to guide the audience through your talk. In this case, the hand-out will be a note-frame, which is given out before the presentation. Don't put too much into it, or the audience will read the handout instead of listening to you.
- To act as a record of your presentation, which the audience can take away. This could be either a note frame or a fuller text. For this 'record' type of handout, it's common practice to add your address and email address, so that people working in the same field can contact you later. Some presenters like to give out this type of handout at the end of their talk, so that the audience listens with full attention. Others give it out at the start, as a support to listening.
- Keep your handout short - one page if possible.

Notes

- Visual aids often provide sufficient support for your presentation. If you feel you need notes as well, remember that they will be more to cope with during the presentation: you will have to deal with the visual aids, the notes, and the audience.
- Cards, or A5 paper, are often recommended because they are neater in the hand than big pages. Make sure you number them clearly!

Non-verbal communication

POSTURE

- Stand straight but not stiff.
- Balance your weight evenly on both feet.
- Standing well allows your diaphragm to move more easily to control your breathing and voice production. So you feel better, sound better, and look better.

MOVEMENT AND GESTURES

- Too much movement is distracting; no movement at all is boring and uncommunicative.
- Use movements and gestures to signal transition points or to stress points of importance.
- Avoid meaningless gestures and repetitive movements. Don't wave your left hand about in circles or wave the pointer about. Use the pointer only when necessary, and with a firm movement. If you have a laser pointer, keep your hand close to your body when using it; don't hold it at arm's length like a gun.



FACIAL EXPRESSION

MOVEMENT AND GESTURES

- Your facial expression must match your message. If you claim something is interesting, look as if you find it so.
- Relax your facial muscles. If you look nervous, the audience will not be comfortable.
- In the ten minutes before you start, make sure your tongue is relaxed and not raised tensely against the roof of your mouth. If you can discreetly yawn widely once or twice, this will help to relax your facial and throat muscles and to feel less tense.

Non-verbal communication

VOICE

- Speak a little louder than you think is necessary. Project your voice to the back of the room. Use your diaphragm to do this, not the muscles of your throat. Keep the muscles of your throat and mouth relaxed. Otherwise your voice loses resonance and power, and is less pleasant to listen to.
- Speak a little more slowly than you normally do, especially if you feel nervous. This will help you sound and feel more confident. A useful rule-of-thumb is: the larger the audience, the more slowly you should speak.
- Use your voice as a communication tool. Vary the speed - speak more slowly in the introduction and the conclusion. Use stress for important points and contrasts. A short silence can also serve to emphasise a point or a transition. All these techniques contribute greatly to making a presentation interesting to listen to.

EYE CONTACT

- Eye contact creates a relationship between the speaker and the audience. It encourages the audience to listen. It helps to relax the speaker. So look at people.

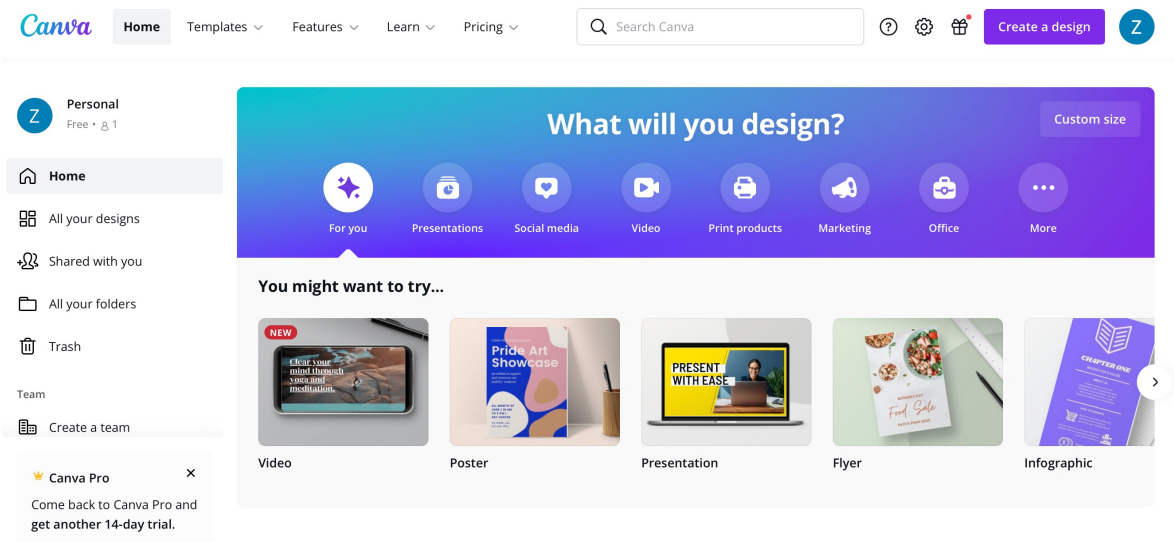


- Start and end with direct eye contact, looking round the whole audience. During the talk, don't gaze over people's heads or out of the window. Look at your visual aids (and notes if you have them) as much as is necessary, but don't stare at them and talk to them. Look at the audience as much as you can.
- Don't look always at the same section of the audience or, even worse, at one 'victim'. Don't dart your eyes about quickly, or sweep your gaze round like a searchlight. Focus on one person or group for 1-2 seconds; then look at another person or group, then another.

Useful tools

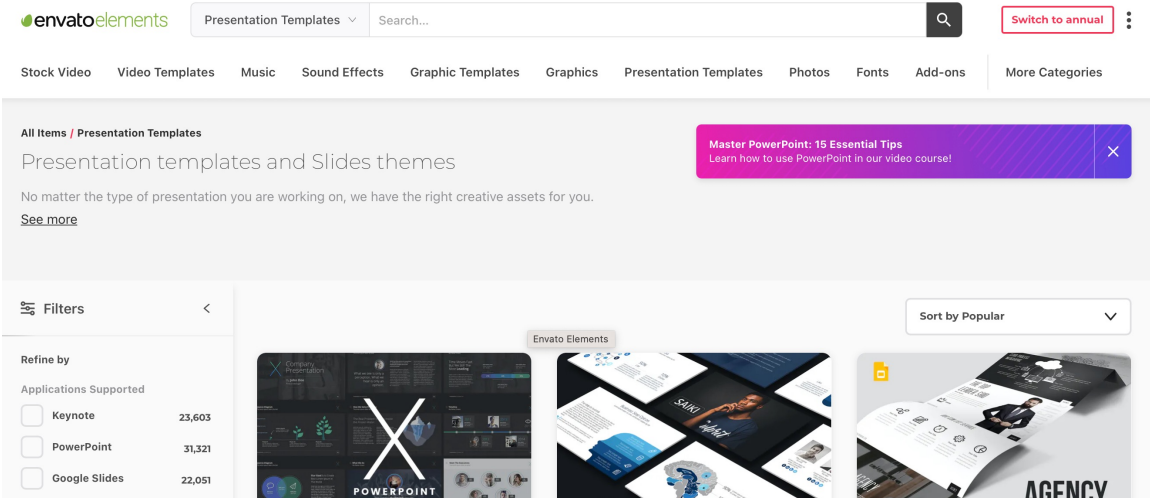
Canva is an online design and publishing tool with a mission to empower everyone in the world to design anything and publish anywhere.

<https://www.canva.com>



Envato Elements is a paid membership that will give you access to several digital products. These products can be used and downloaded for a several times. It includes: graphics, procreate brushes, videos, templates, WordPress themes and more.

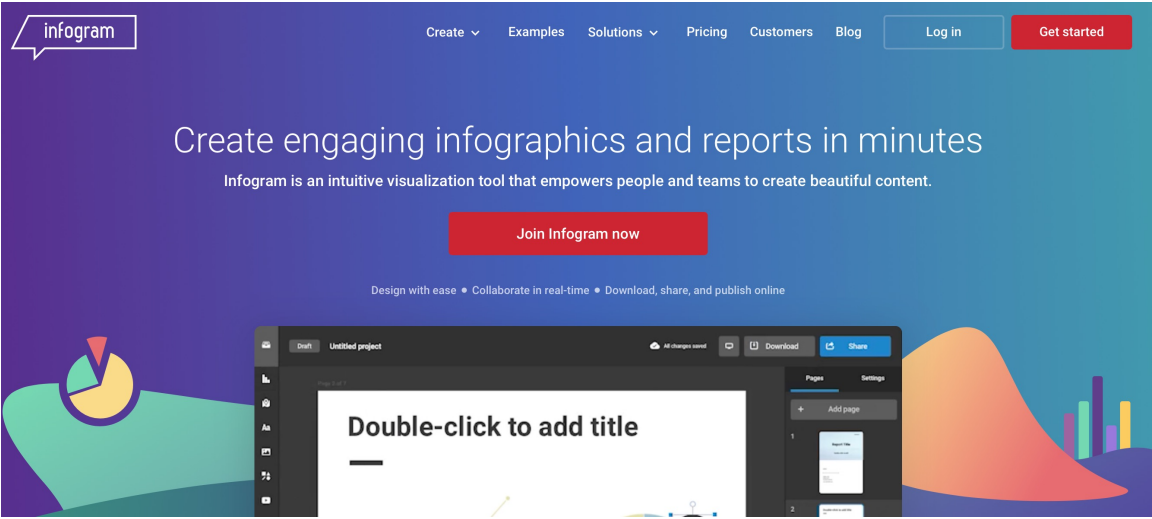
<https://elements.envato.com>



Useful tools

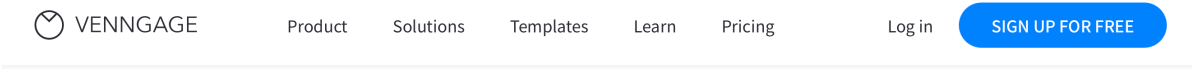
Infogram is an intuitive visualization tool that empowers people and teams to create beautiful content.

<https://infogram.com>



Vennngage is an online tool for creating infographics, reports, and data visualizations.

<https://venngage.com>



Create Better Infographics



Say goodbye to dull documents, dry data and confusing communications with Venngage — the infographic design solution.

[SIGN UP FOR FREE](#)