

Homework Assignment #4, Presentation Basics

The purpose of this assignment is to practice presentation basics for formal science talks. The content of your talk is irrelevant—for the first and **only** time in your career. What we want you to do is think of a topic that you'd like to tell the class about; it can be on anything—a physics concept, a hobby, a research project you've done, something you've designed or built, an instrument you can play, an exotic locale you've visited. The goal is to pick a topic that you can speak about confidently, without going to a lot of work, and that you think would be of interest to your intended audience.

1. Pick a topic that you can cover in a little less than 4 min and allow time to answer one question. Timing is an extremely important skill to master, and points will be deducted for going much under or 1 sec over your allotted 4 min. So rehearse!
2. Make three slides in PPT or other presentation software.
 - a. The first slide should be a “title” slide that gives the title of your talk, your name, your “affiliation” (i.e., Department of Physics, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign), and the date of the talk. Provide a visually interesting figure that illustrates your main idea and engages the audience.
 - b. The second slide should have a motivating statement (main idea) at the top of the slide and include evidence, examples, illustrations, or explanations of that main idea.
 - c. The third slide should reiterate the main message of the talk (speaker's rule of 3) and include your name and contact information.



3. Practice your talk, out loud, in front of real people. Check your timing and revise the content of your talk until you can give it in about 3 ½ min.

You will present your talk to your fellow students during class on September 27. You will be graded on the following criteria:

1. Turn off your cell phone!
2. Thank the moderator for the introduction and start immediately with your talk. Don't tell the audience—again—your name, affiliation, and the title of your talk.
3. Maintain an even pace—no speeding up or slowing down appreciably during the talk.
4. Speak in a conversational tone, not too rapidly to be understood. If English is not your first language, or even if it is, enunciate your words deliberately and distinctly—no mumbling. Do not memorize your talk and rattle it off woodenly, from rote memory. Talk to us, not at us.

5. Rehearse enough that you can deliver your talk smoothly. Avoid *verbal fillers*—“um,” “er,” “well, like,” “you know...”
6. Maintain eye contact with *everyone* in your audience. No looking at the floor, the ceiling, the walls, staring into space. DO NOT turn your back on the audience to read words off the screen. You may use written notes, but don't look at them exclusively.
7. Point out features on your slides with the laser pointer; don't wave vaguely at the screen with your hand or point with a finger.
8. Avoid pacing, flapping around, jingling coins in your pockets, and other nervous mannerisms. (Easy to say—hard to do, at least at first. It gets easier, trust me.)
9. Conclude your talk by thanking the audience for their attention and saying that you're ready to take questions. Don't just trail off at the end or stop abruptly and make the audience guess that you're done.

Due: **Friday, September 27, by NOON.** Send your slides to PHYS496@physics.illinois.edu **by noon** on the due date so they can be loaded on the computer in Room 158 LLP. You will then present your talk during class. Although we will give you feedback on the quality of your slides, your grade will be determined solely on the professionalism of your presentation. This assignment is not eligible for rewrite points.

Total—100 points