



Preparing for a presentation

HTA LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT



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Reducing anxiety and building confidence

‘Glossophobia’, or fear of public speaking, is the most common phobia - beating spiders and heights¹! It is estimated to affect around 75% of the population, but there are easy steps you can take to reduce presentation anxiety.

Long before the presentation

Some people feel anxious at the thought of a presentation - even if it is months away, and this can prevent them from even getting started. If this happens to you, try the following:

1. Visualise...

- ...yourself delivering your ideal presentation, handling questions with composure
- ...the audience receiving your presentation really well, and their applause or feedback at the end
- ...a problem or something going wrong and then handling it with ease – for example there is no HDMI cable to connect your laptop to the big screen, so you pack a USB with your slides on



2. **Organise** your thoughts by breaking down the task at hand into bitesize chunks so it feels less daunting. Good preparation is key.



3. **Actualise** – rehearse your presentation in an environment as close as possible to where you’ll deliver it. If you can, use the same equipment, in the same room; and a small audience can help you take the process more seriously and not skip parts.

Top tip!

Try a ‘power pose’ before you present

Find somewhere private for 2 minutes beforehand to try it. Research has linked body language to confidence as well as a significant reduction in the hormone responsible for stress.

Watch the short 3-minute video below for more information:

<https://youtu.be/r7dWsJ-mEyl>



Reducing anxiety and building confidence

Research has shown 90% of the anxiety we feel before a presentation, comes from a lack of preparation². Here's some handy tips to try, to get you as physically ready for a presentation as possible.

Just before the presentation

Some people feel most nervous just before they are about to speak – if this is you, try these tips:

1. **Breathe deeply** – sit up straight or stand tall and concentrate on breathing from the diaphragm, taking at least twice as long to breathe out as you did breathing in.



2. **Focus on relaxing** – your body is in fight or flight mode, so you can try to reverse these thoughts. As you breathe, say “I am” as you inhale and “relaxed” as you exhale (as in step 1). Imagine a lake becoming stiller and stiller as you breathe, until it looks just like a mirror.
3. **Release tension** – we hold tension in our bodies making us look stiff and preventing a relaxed delivery. Identify where you hold tension, and tense these body parts as much as possible before releasing it, so you feel the tension leaving your body.



During the presentation

Some people experience the most anxiety as they are presenting, with symptoms like: sweating, trembling, fiddling, a shaky voice or a dry throat. If any of these sound familiar, try these tips:

1. **Move** – use your arms and hands to gesture normally and don't be afraid to walk around a little – you'll release some tension and appear confident



2. **Individuals** – most of us are fine speaking to one person, so think of a group as just a number of individuals. Identify a friendly face in the audience and focus on talking to them to begin with. As your confidence rises, you can take in other faces.



8 steps to a great presentation

Try these eight handy steps to make sure your content and delivery is the best it can be.



1) Know your objectives

2) Mind-map the main ideas

3) Organise into logical chunks

4) Top & tail it

5) Anticipate questions

6) Develop visual aids

7) Prepare handouts

8) Rehearse

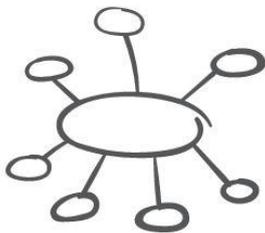
Each stage is described in more detail on the next few pages.

8 steps to a great presentation

1. Know your objectives

- › Ask yourself **'why'**? – what is the purpose of your talk, is it information or persuasion?
- › Analyse your audience – how knowledgeable are they on the subject? Which angle will their interest come from?
- › What **three things** do you want your audience to remember? (see step 3)

2. Mind-map your main ideas



3. Organise into logical chunks

Breaking your presentation in to bitesize chunks will make it more digestible for your audience and easier for you to deliver.

Three has been proven to be the most easily absorbed number of points in one 'chunk'.

One way to do this is to have three main points to your talk (chunks). Within each chunk, you could then have three sub-points to illustrate the main point.



4. Top and tail it!

First and last impressions stay in a listener's memory the longest. This formula can help you ensure they remember the important parts:

Tell them what you are going to tell them

- › About you
- › Your three main points you'll be covering
- › Why it's important to them
- › Set the ground-rules (see the top tip below!)

Tell them

- › The main body of your presentation

Tell them what you have told them

- › Summarise your three main points
- › Conclusion and call-to-action

Top tip!

Take control of questions

If you know that people asking questions during your talk will put you off; make a point of explaining you've set aside time for questions at the end. Alternatively, if you thrive from questions – let people know you're happy to take them throughout!



8 steps to a great presentation

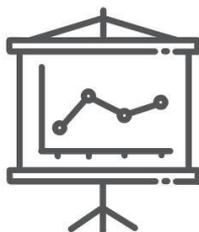
5. Anticipate questions

To prepare for questions as best as you can, try taking a step back and thinking what you didn't know when you were less knowledgeable on the subject. It can also be a good idea to show some colleagues who are less familiar with the topic, and prepare answers for the questions that come up.

6. Develop visual aids

Consider which of the different visual aids available would best help your audience understand the information you present – and also help you with your delivery. Some examples could be: PowerPoint slides, live demonstrations, handouts or a flipchart and pen.

Also consider the most appropriate aids for the: room size, audience numbers, interaction level, time restrictions and subject matter.



7. Prepare handouts

Handouts can be handy to prevent your audience furiously scribbling notes throughout your talk. But they can also be distracting if handed out at the start, with some people choosing to read ahead, rather than listen to you. And if you send them in advance, they could be forgotten.

After deciding which approach is best for you, it's important to tell the audience of your intentions, so they know how much note-taking they'll need to do.



8. Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse!

Practice really does make perfect, and familiarising yourself with the presentation environment can help you feel more at home too. Your voice is your most powerful tool, so it's important to practice pace, pitch, projection and pauses, so your delivery is as faultless as possible.



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