

Tips for Cultivating Your Scientific Presentation Skills

During the course of a scientific career, you will be called on many times to present on a scientific topic or to share your latest research findings.

Presenting research, whether in person at a poster, a presentation, or by an online format, is one of the primary ways scientists communicate with each other and spread new findings. How can you give effective presentations that engage your audience and shine a light on your research? Follow these ten tips to start on the pathway to becoming a professional presenter.

1 Focus on your audience.

Before you start to prepare your presentation, know your expected audience composition, consider their knowledge of the topic, and think about their expectations.



2 Tell a story.

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Avoid dumping your data and findings in the audience's lap. Craft the story of your research — why it is important, what your findings are, and how your findings might impact the next research steps.



3 Keep your visuals streamlined.

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Don't overload slides or posters with information and carefully select figures, designs, and graphs that support your story, helping your audience quickly focus.



6 Practice, practice, practice.

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Practice alone and then with an audience of your colleagues, and rehearse as often as your need to feel comfortable with the presentation.



5 Keep to the designated time.

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For posters, prepare a 2-minute elevator pitch. For presentations, time yourself during practice sessions.



4 Don't read directly from the slides or poster.

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Make sure that what you say gives even more insight to your audience than the visuals. Graphics should supplement the oral talk.



7 Acknowledge contributors.

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Think carefully about all the people who contributed to your work, and make sure they are listed and properly acknowledged.



8 Have a plan for handling questions.

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Have colleagues and friends share their thoughts and develop a strategy for answering questions.



9 Be well rested, healthy, and relaxed.

Be well rested, healthy, and relaxed.

Learn and practice relaxation tips such as taking several deep breaths before starting.



10 Dress for success.

Dress for success.

Make sure you wear professional attire that represents the image you want to portray to your audience.

