



Moving from Paper to Presentation

Many professors require students to use a completed paper as the basis for a presentation. While it may seem as though this is a simple step requiring little or no preparation, this is a misconception; many important tasks remain to be done. Here are a few suggestions:

- Do not just read your paper. Not only is this incredibly boring for your audience, it also probably will be impossible to fit the contents of your entire paper into the time allotted for this presentation. You will need to select the most important content: Choose parts that are especially compelling, interesting, and well supported. Select a few especially helpful examples or illustrations to increase clarity and comprehension. Use an outline to organize these elements effectively.
- After you have selected your content, compose an introduction. One essential element of a good introduction is to indicate what you'll be talking about: Specify the main points of your presentation so that your audience knows where you are going. This is especially important to do in an oral presentation, where your audience cannot simply flip back to a previous page if they lose track of where you are. You should indicate throughout the presentation where you are and where you're going.
- Another crucial part of your introduction is to make a connection with your audience. This is especially important in an oral presentation because your audience is right there in front of you. While you may not have thought much about your audience when writing the paper (beyond your professor, of course), in the presentation you need to speak to them in a way that acknowledges their very important role in your presentation experience. After all, without them, you would just be standing alone in a room talking to yourself. Do what you can to make your presentation interesting for your audience.
- You may wish to show some of the content so your audience understands it better. Please refer to the OCC handout on "Using Presentational Aids" for guidelines and tips for doing so effectively.
- Become familiar enough with the content of your presentation so that you do not have to read your notes like a script. Please refer to the OCC handout on "Delivering Your Presentation" for suggestions and strategies related to this issue.