



Using Presentational Aids

Some presentation situations require that you design and use visual aids in order to help you convey your ideas. There are many important considerations when thinking about visual aids, but here are a few questions to ask yourself:

- Will a visual aid enhance your presentation? If not, don't use one.
- What specific content in your presentation will be especially well served by presentational aids? Statistics, complex processes, and unfamiliar objects, sounds, or other phenomena may require visual representation in order for your audience to be able to understand them.
- What kind of visual aid is appropriate for the presentation context? For example, is PowerPoint technology available? Will passing around a fragile item be risky? Will the audience be able to see a chart that you are displaying? Keep in mind that your audience needs to be able to see your materials clearly, and that passing around an object or handout is potentially distracting.
- What information is crucial to include on the visual aid itself, and what information should be supplied orally by you? You always should explain your visual aid to your audience, rather than letting it speak for you. Also, you should only include information on the visual aid that is necessary so it does not become cluttered and confusing to your audience. It is better to include less information on more presentational aids than to include too much information on one.
- How and when during your presentation will you need to refer to your presentational aids? Make sure you practice with them so you can incorporate and refer to them smoothly and seamlessly. If you will be relying on technology available in the room, familiarize yourself with it in advance and arrive early to get set up. Always have a back-up plan in case the technology does not cooperate with you!