

Oral Presentation Guidelines and Marking Criteria

Oral Presentation Guidelines

Presentations vs. essays

Oral presentations are comparable to essays in that both provide an overview and discussion of a particular topic or problem.

However, oral presentations differ from essays because they are geared towards explaining a topic to your peers rather than writing to your examiners.

Oral presentations give you a chance to discuss the research that you have done in person (or the online equivalent!) in an engaging way, rather than summarising it in academic writing. In this respect, oral presentations can be more dynamic and informal than essays.

Presentations are good preparation for work that you might need to do later on in your professional life (e.g. talks to colleagues or to the public).

Length of presentation

Your presentation should be approximately 10-15 minutes long.

After the presentation, your audience will have around 5 minutes to ask follow-up questions.

Structure of presentation

Your presentation should be a clear, concise outline of your topic designed for an audience of your peers (as well as your lecturer and second marker).

Your presentation should include the following components:

- An introduction to the topic
- An explanation of why the topic is important or worth examining
- A survey of the main issues comprising the topic, including a discussion of relevant secondary sources (illustrated by examples from primary texts, if relevant to your topic)
- A conclusion summarising your findings, based on the points discussed in the body of the presentation

Presentation style

Your presentation should be given orally, i.e., not based on reading from notes. (You can bring bullet points to help you remember main points to cover, but try not to depend too much on extensive notes.)

Use of visual aids

It is recommended that you use visual aids (e.g., PowerPoint) as these can help you to structure your talk and will make it easy to provide examples of points that you are discussing.

However, there is no need for numerous slides; around 5-10 is probably enough, depending on what you are discussing, how many examples you'd like to show, etc.

Don't feel that you must include large amounts of text on the slides; a few bullet points and/or examples are fine.

As with the presentation overall, the most important thing to aim for with the visual aids is clarity.

Oral Presentation Marking Criteria

Your presentation will be marked on the following criteria.

As with essays, markers will focus on the ways in which your presentation meets these criteria overall, rather than subtracting individual marks for specific issues (as is the case with language assessments).

Presentations will be first and second marked.

- **Clarity and structure of presentation**
 - a clear overview of the topic
 - a coherent structure that follows a logical order
 - focus on points that are relevant to the topic
- **Use of secondary literature**
 - understanding of the relevant secondary literature
 - analysis and (when applicable) synthesis
 - clear presentation of the arguments made by the secondary sources
- **Use of primary sources (where relevant for your topic)**
 - ability to select relevant primary examples
 - ability to analyse the examples to illustrate pertinent points
- **Engagement**
 - ability to present your topic in an accessible and engaging way (so that the audience comes away with a clear understanding of your topic)
 - ability to discuss your topic with peers in the question period following the presentation
 - ability to present orally (i.e., without reading from a sheet)

Oral presentations will be recorded so that they can be viewed by the external examiner.