

Wikimania

Speaker Guidebook



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Introduction

Introduction

About

Welcome!

If you are here, you are likely hosting or participating in a session at Wikimania. The following guidebook is a self-guided resource for you. It aims to take you through the steps of creating, practicing and delivering an engaging talk for your fellow Wikimedians.



Who is this for?

This guidebook is designed for Wikimania session hosts who plan to speak to an audience, regardless of whether you are presenting a live or pre-recorded session. Your session may be a lecture, lightning talk, case study, tutorial, and others.

You may have some experience giving talks and are looking for reminders, or are completely new to public speaking. Either way, this is for you.

What's in this guide?

This guidebook includes recommended practices, examples, and exercises. It covers the key steps of preparing a talk:

- Refining your **topic**
- Writing your **outline**
- Creating **visuals**
- **Delivering** your talk
- **Practicing** and more practicing
- Engaging your **audience**

Introduction

Questions and Answers

What if I plan to pre-record my session for Wikimania?

- You can still use this guidebook! The only difference between you and live speakers is that you will not be hosting a live Q&A but instead can optionally answer questions through chat while your recording is being played. The topics covered in this guidebook still apply to you

What if I am hosting an interactive session (for example, a workshop)?

- This guide might still be helpful, but know that the focus is on public speaking rather than facilitation. For guidance on facilitation, reach out to the Wikimania organizing team for support
- You can also check the “Facilitation Resources” page at the end of this guidebook for additional resources

What if I need more speaker support?

- The “Resources” section at the end of this guidebook contains materials that can further help you prepare your talk
- If you would like individual support, you can contact the Community Development team at comdevteam@wikimedia.org

Who do I contact with questions?

- For questions about Wikimania, attend a Wikimania office hour or visit the Wikimania help desk. More information can be found at <https://wikimania.wikimedia.org/>
- For any technical questions related to Wikimania, contact wikimania@wikimedia.org
- For questions about speaker support, contact the Community Development team at comdevteam@wikimedia.org

Introduction

Speaker Checklist



If you are someone who likes checklists, below is a list of items to consider doing before, during, and after Wikimania.

Before

- Read and use this guide :)
- Create your talk
- Practice, practice, and practice some more!
- Do a tech run-through by checking your internet connection, computer setup, and video platform used to give your talk
- If you are pre-recording your session, do a few versions of the recording before selecting the best one
- Promote your session online on relevant Wikimedia channels

On the day

- Check your internet speed. For video streaming, it is recommended to have at least 3 megabits per second (Mbps) upload speed. Use a site like [librespeed.org](https://www.librespeed.org/) to check. If your speed is lower than the advised number, see if you can arrange to present from somewhere else with better speed during your presentation
- Prepare your physical space, including lighting, background, laptop position
- Get yourself water if you think you will be nervous¹
- Perform another tech run-through
- Practice before your session
- Stay calm

After

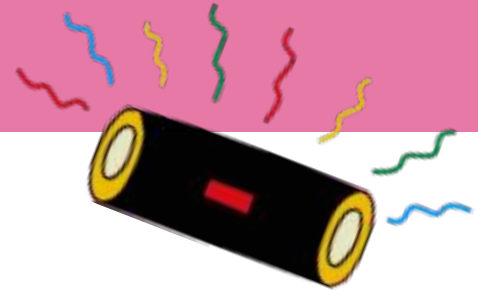
- Upload your slides to Commons
- Update your presentation submission page on the Wikimania wiki with a link to the slides and any other materials

1. Anxiety is linked to dry mouth: <https://www.anxietycentre.com/anxiety-disorders/symptoms/dry-mouth-anxiety/>

Overview of
**Public
Speaking**

Overview of Public Speaking

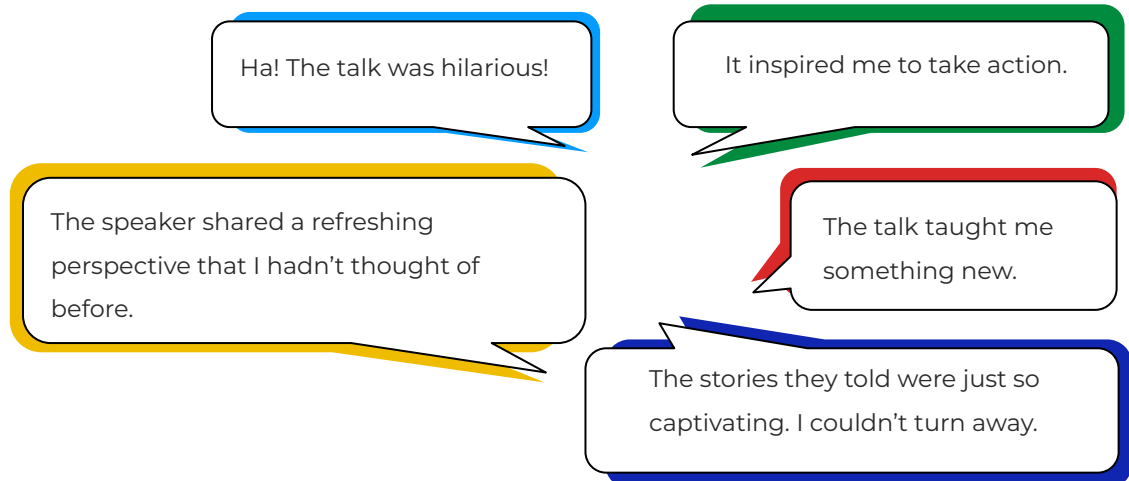
Great Public Speaking



Before we start thinking about your talk, let's take a look at what we mean when we say great public speaking.

Think back to the last amazing talk you heard. Pretend you are telling your friend about it. What do you say to the friend?

You might be thinking...



A great talk, as you can see, can mean many things and trigger various reactions. However, when you examine further, you can see that they have common ingredients that make them “great.”

Take a moment to reflect

What do you think the ingredients of a great talk are?

Overview of Public Speaking

Ingredients of Great Public Speaking

Although what we consider to be a “great” talk can vary from context to context and person to person, there are several common ingredients that can help us identify when a talk is great. These include:

- **Accomplishing its purpose**

A great talk is one that has a clear purpose and is able to reach its audience in the way it was intended to

- **Simplicity**

A great talk is simple and clear. It focuses on one key message and doesn't try to cover a large array of different points

- **Vibrant stories**

A great talk tells vivid and resonating stories that help its audience visualize and feel what is being said

- **A beginning, middle, and end**

A great talk has a structure that helps its audience follow along and understand each point



- **Connection with the audience**

A great talk shares information that is relevant to its audience and is delivered in a way that builds a real connection with them

- **Enthusiasm and authentic passion**

A great talk is one where its speaker genuinely finds the topic so fascinating that they need to share it with others

These ingredients will be discussed in more detail in the following sections of this guidebook.

Overview of Public Speaking

Examples of Great Public Speaking

By watching other people give talks, you can begin to identify what works well and what doesn't. You can then apply these insights to your own talk.

Here are a few examples of great talks. Choose one to watch (or watch them all if you're interested!).

Miguel Morachimo's 2020 RightsCon Talk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OUtRHPaEidg>

Video length: 12 minutes, 14 seconds

Asaf Bartov's 2018 National Digital Forum Talk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=24DOvuZWaD0>

Video length: 7 minutes, 37 seconds

Dananjaya Hettiarachchi's 2014 Toastmasters Speech

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbz2boNSeL0>

Video length: 7 minutes, 53 seconds

Mohammed Qahtani's 2015 Toastmasters Speech

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqq1roF4C8s>

Video length: 11 minutes, 25 seconds

As you watch, ask yourself:

- Is this a great talk? Why?
- What did this talk make me think or feel?
- What do I think its purpose was? Did it achieve that purpose?
- Do I notice the ingredients mentioned earlier?
- Considering my own public speaking, how does this talk compare?

Bonus! It's also helpful to see a bad talk so you know what not to do. Here is one:

Dr. Fischer-Katz's Science Research Presentation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSGqp4-bZQY>

Video length: 7 minutes, 53 seconds

Overview of Public Speaking

Your Turn

An exercise

Think back to an experience where you gave a great talk. If you are thinking to yourself, “But I have never given a talk!” let us remind you that a talk happens in all contexts and sizes, big and small. A talk can be a presentation you give during a work meeting, a conversation convincing a friend to do something, a dinner with family where you shared a piece of news, or even a conversation you had with yourself when you had to convince yourself to be brave. Choose a moment where you gave a great talk and ask yourself, “What were the ingredients that made that talk great?”

Reflect on this and write down your thoughts in at least 3-4 sentences or bullet points.



Step 1

Refining Your Topic

Refining Your Topic

Purpose



Understanding your purpose

At the time of reading this, you have already selected your topic and likely have a general idea of what you will be speaking about at Wikimania. See this page as an opportunity to refine and clarify your message.

It is important to understand not only what you want to share (your topic) and what you want the audience to gain (outcomes), but why you are hosting this session in the first place. This is the **purpose**, and it is a crucial element of developing your talk.

What can the purpose be?

Your purpose can be specific to your topic or a broader vision. You may be trying to **persuade** your audience, to **change** their minds, to **excite** them, to **demonstrate** something to them, or to **inform** them.

Take a moment to reflect

Some questions to ask yourself as you define your session's purpose:

- Why am I bringing people together? What is the need?
- How can I design and deliver a session that supports this need?
- What do I want people to take away from this?
- What can I do to achieve my purpose?
- What will get in the way of achieving this purpose?

Refining Your Topic

Core Message

Articulating your core message

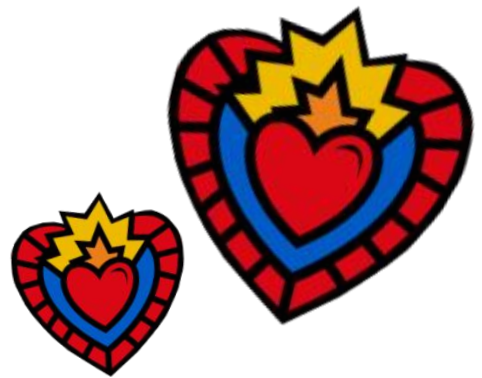
Defining your purpose helps you get to the **core message** of your session. This is the central point you want your audience to leave your session with.

Remember, keep it simple and focus on one core message.

Take a moment to reflect

Some questions to ask yourself as you define your session's core message:

- What is the one thing I want my audience to take away?
- If I could only tell my audience one thing, what would it be?
- If my message is complicated or contains several points, can I justify including each point? What is so crucial about each one?



Refining Your Topic

Your Audience

Knowing your audience

Anticipating your audience and what they may want to learn from you is important for creating a session that benefits and engages them.

By taking time to think about who may join your session, or alternatively, who your session is intended for, you can **avoid the risk of alienating** them, **offending** them, and talking about something **irrelevant** to them.

It is easy to assume that your audience will be similar to you, have the same interests as you, beliefs as you, and even same word associations as you, but you **shouldn't assume** this.

What do you know?

You won't know exactly who will attend your talk, but you already know your audience will be a diverse group. What else do you know about them? On the next page, you will find an audience analysis worksheet with questions to help you think about your audience. Although you won't be able to answer the questions with specificity, it is still a helpful exercise to do in order to plan your talk.

Helpful Reminders

- Your audience might not be familiar with your topic. Provide enough background information and orientation to your session's topic
- Your audience might not know the terminology you're using. Use common words or provide explanations for specialist words. This applies to acronyms as well. Avoid them or provide an explanation on first mention
- Your use of English might be hard to understand. Use simpler words, enunciate your words, and slow down
- Your audience includes people with various accessibility needs or disabilities. Be mindful of this as you prepare your talk¹

1. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank have conducted a world report on disabilities. This is a helpful place to orient yourself to the types of disabilities that exist: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241564182>

Refining Your Topic

Audience Analysis

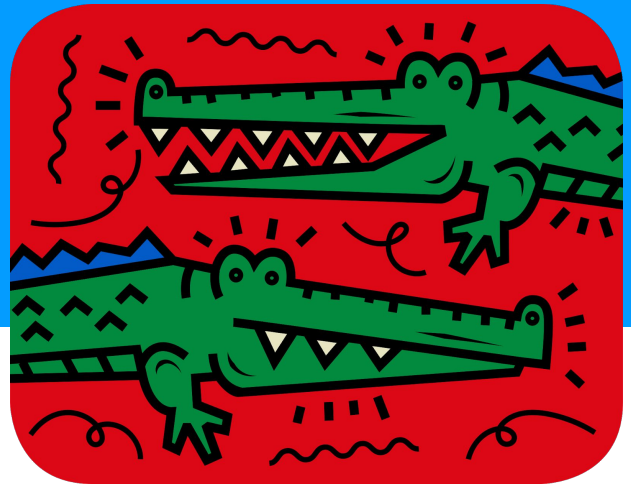
An audience analysis worksheet².

Questions	Information about audience	How you can enhance your talk to align with your audience
<p>What does your audience know about your topic?</p> <p>What is their involvement with Wikimedia?</p> <p>What social and cultural backgrounds do they identify with (religion, gender, age, education, etc.)?</p> <p>What language(s) are they most comfortable with?</p> <p>What would surprise them about your topic?</p> <p>What don't you know about them?</p> <p>What would make them uncomfortable?</p> <p>How might they be feeling as they come into your session?</p> <p>How might you adapt your tone for this audience?</p> <p>How might they react to what you say?</p> <p>What might they want to know from you?</p> <p>How can you best reach them?</p>		

2. This worksheet is inspired by speaker coach Andrew Dlugan's audience analysis worksheet. His worksheet includes a longer list of questions if you are curious for more: <http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/audience-analysis-worksheet.pdf>

Refining Your Topic

Your Turn



An exercise

Here is another exercise for you to try. It's called **My Worst Fear**. Even the most seasoned speakers have fears before they give a talk.

Maybe it is a fear that...

- The audience gets bored and leaves
- The audience has confused looks on their faces
- The audience misses your key message
- You tell a joke that no one laughs at
- You forget what you wanted to say

... the list is endless!

Choose your biggest fear from the list (or a different fear not listed) and ask yourself, "What would you do to make that fear come true?" Yes, you read that correctly!

For example, if your biggest fear is forgetting what to say, you can make this come true by: not preparing for the talk, not bringing speaking notes to help remind you of your points, or writing your notes in such messy handwriting that it confuses you during your talk. The point of this exercise is to think about the worst case situations so that you are aware of them and can avoid them.

Bonus! You can also respond to the question, "What would you do to *prevent* your fear from becoming true?"

For this exercise write your answer to the question in at least 3-4 sentences or bullet points.

Step 2

**Writing
Your
Outline**

Writing Your Outline

Structure

Structuring your talk

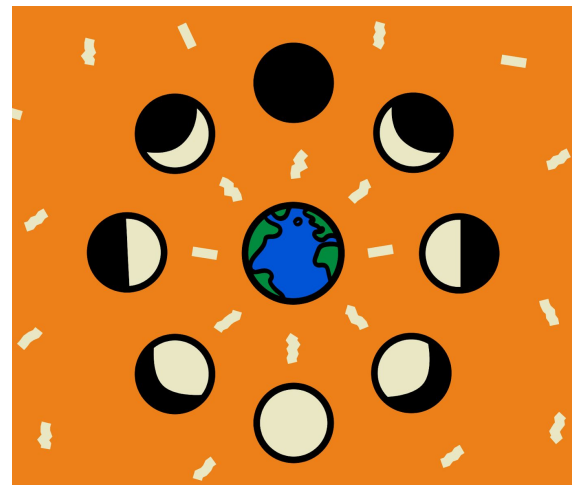
Before going straight away to writing your talk, it's helpful to first write an outline. An outline is a written plan for your talk. It contains two parts: structure and content. Let's first discuss structure.

The structure of your session is how you organize your content into a cohesive talk. You will later discover that having a clear structure can make the process of writing the content of your talk easier. The structure will act as a frame that guides you towards what you want to share.

Structure helps you tell a cohesive narrative that your audience understands.

A common structure

There are many variations for how one can structure a talk¹, however, the most common structure that many talks, stories, and movies follow is this simple (and seemingly obvious) one: **beginning, middle, and end**. There is a lot of freedom with this simple structure. What could you include in a beginning, a middle and an end? Continue to the next page for some suggestions.



Questions to ask about structure

- What comes first, second, third, ... last?
- What do you talk about at each period of time?
- How do ideas link together?

Helpful Reminders

- Your structure will depend on your talk's topic, purpose, and format so use this as a starting point
- Choosing a structure is an evolving process. Experiment with a structure and allow changes to happen as you progress

1. If you are curious to see some other structures, visit this article titled "Story structure – the hidden framework that hangs your story together": <https://www.presentation-guru.com/on-structure-the-hidden-framework-that-hangs-your-story-together/>

Writing Your Outline

A Common Structure

Beginning

The beginning is your moment to captivate your audience. It often contains two elements: a **hook** and your **core message**

Hook: instead of beginning with, “My name is [your name] and I will talk about [your topic],” open with a hook that gets your audience’s attention. What could a hook be? Some ideas:

- A bold statement
- A rhetorical question
- A quote
- An interesting fact
- A surprise
- A personal story

Important to keep in mind that your hook should relate to your topic, or better yet, your core message

Core message: after your hook, reveal the central idea you want your audience to leave with, or central reason you have brought them together that day

Middle

The middle is where you share **your main points**. It often follows the Rule of Three², presenting 3 elements, for instance:

- **Story #1** and **your point**
- **Story #2** and **your point**
- **Story #3** and **your point**

End

The end of your talk is your moment to review your talk and **leave your audience with something memorable**. It often includes one of the following³:

- A **summary** of your core message
- A **reminder** of your main points
- A **call to action**

2. You can read about the Rule of Three here: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_of_three_\(writing\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_of_three_(writing))

3. For ideas about how to write your conclusion and introduction, read Meggie Mapes’s book *Speak Out, Call In: Public Speaking As Advocacy*, Chapter 6: <https://speakupcallin.pressbooks.com/chapter/chapter-6-organizing-and-outlining/>

Writing Your Outline

Content

After selecting a structure, the next step of creating your outline is to write your **talk's content**. You can use full sentences or short bullet points. You can begin with bullets and then later turn them into sentences. This is up to you. What you write here will later be the document you use to practice giving your talk. We will discuss that later in the "Practicing and More Practicing" section.

Here is a suggestion for the steps to take when writing your outline based on the beginning, middle, and end structure:

1. Write the middle

- Gather the content
- Brainstorm key points. Write all your ideas down
- Think about your audience. What might they want to know? What might they ask? What objections might they raise? Add ideas based on this
- Narrow down and choose the most important points
- Order the points. What is an order that creates cohesion and a logical progression?
- Ensure you have a logical progression from point to point. How can you do that? Here are example formats:

- Sequence (this after that)
- Cause-and-effect (this because of that)
- Example after general idea
- Counter-example or criticism of the previous idea

2. Write the beginning

- Write your hook
- Write your core message. Try to connect the hook and the core message

3. Write the end

- Think of how to transition to your ending
- Write your memorable ending, may it be a call to action, a review of your core message, or a summary of your main points



Helpful Reminders

- If using context-specific examples or vocabulary, be sure to explain it for people who may not be familiar with it
- Be careful about overstating points or repeating too much
- Don't ramble on and on. Keep points succinct
- Anticipate your audience's questions and incorporate them into your talk where possible

Writing Your Outline

Some Tips

Beginning

- Start by helping the audience answer the question, “Why should I care?”
- Use the beginning to connect with the audience
- Help them understand what you plan to tell them and provide signposts along the way so that they know how to follow you. For instance, use a phrase like, “I would like to offer three lessons from our experience,” or, “After two case studies, I'll invite discussion”

Middle

- Stay close to your core message and add details to illustrate your points only as needed
- Talk about what you know, do your research, don't exaggerate, and don't lie!

End

- The last words the audience hears are likely the last thing they remember, so make sure you end with a compelling point
- To give a feeling of closure, try not to end abruptly or with a sudden, “That's it! Thanks”

Common Errors

- Including too many details in stories
- Not providing enough context or providing very convoluted context
- Using jargon without explaining terms
- Relying on local customs or terms not actually shared across your diverse audience
- Getting personal: naming or blaming individuals when offering negative lessons

Examples of Common Errors

- The English Wikipedia term for the general discussion page, "Village Pump," is not the same everywhere. That same page is called “café,” “boardwalk,” “canteen,” or even “under the tree” in different wikis
- Giving talks with many TLAs, ETLAs, or fnords will always leave at least some people not understanding. (See what we mean?)
- Giving a start-to-finish history of a local project or conflict when all that would benefit the audience is the generalized lesson
- Over-packing the outline with too much information, regardless of the time available, and then not getting to even half the material, leaving everyone frustrated

Writing Your Outline

Examples of Outlines

Example Talk #1 An introduction to the [X] tool

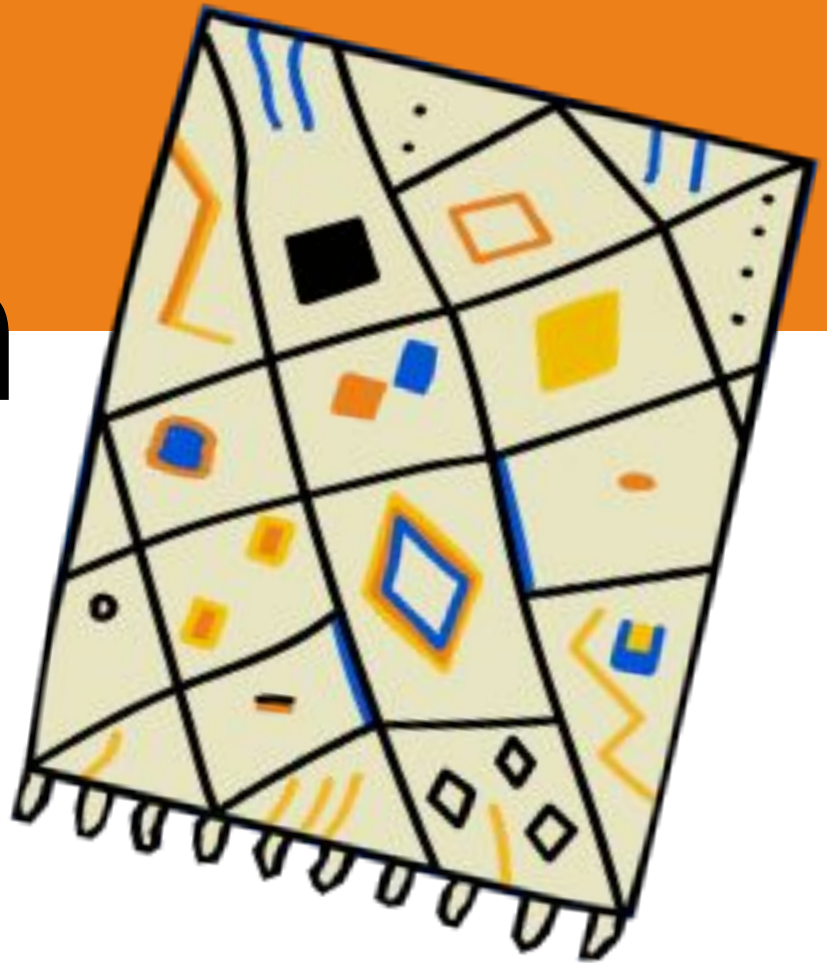
Beginning	• Hook	“Have you ever wanted to do [some task]?”
	• Core Message	“Using [X] can transform the way you do [Y]”
Middle	• Point 1: Past	What life was like before using [X] tool
	• Point 2: Present	What life is like now with [X] tool How [X] tool has improved my life How to use [X] tool. A demonstration
	• Point 3: Future	What the future possibilities and benefits of using [X] tool are
End	• Summary and Call to Action	How to obtain [X] tool and use it to change your life

Example Talk #2 What can we learn from the Feminist movement?

Beginning	• Hook	“Here is a video of two impressive Feminist thinkers”
	• Core Message	The ideas of these two Feminist thinkers can teach Wikimedians important lessons
Middle	• Point 1: Past	The struggles the feminist movement has faced
	• Point 2: Present	How the problem is still real: denying, minimizing, avoiding
	• Point 3: Future	What we can do to reach a feminist future: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term archival work is crucial • Becoming allies and the role of the silent majority
End	• Call to Action	“Use your privilege!”

Writing Your Outline

Your Turn



An exercise

Write an outline for your Wikimania talk. It can be an *extremely* rough sketch with a few bullet points or a detailed script with full sentences. Choose the option you feel most comfortable with.

Step 3

Creating Visuals

Creating Visuals

Visuals

To slide or not to slide, that is the question...

When the word “visuals” comes up, people often think that means slides. They also think, “My talk *obviously* MUST have slides.” Is this you?

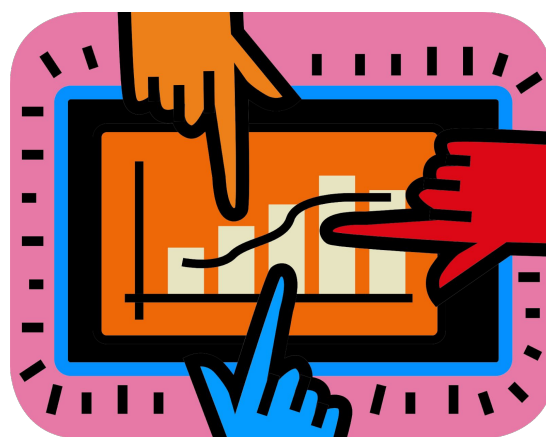
Sometimes, slides aren't the answer! Rather than asking, “What slides should I create?” take a step back and ask yourself this: **How can I share my message in a way that best reaches my purpose and audience?**

- Sometimes the answer is through words only
- Sometimes it may be through a visual representation that isn't slides, such as a diagram, whiteboard, photo, or object
- And sometimes, slides are the answer

Let's pretend that you do decide to create slides. The tendency is to dump all the information into slides, creating detailed, wordy slides. But this is not always the right approach. Why not¹?

- It can be **distracting**. How can someone focus on reading the slide and listening to you at the same time? This can be especially difficult for non-native English speakers
- It can be **boring**. Having text-filled or detail-filled slides can be monotonous, causing your audience to disengage

Now you might be thinking, “Well, how would future audiences access my talk if I don't share (detailed, wordy) slides?” The answer is that you *can* have detailed, wordy slides that you share with your audience **after your talk!** You first want to make sure your talk is interesting for the audience that *is* attending your session. Detailed, wordy slides won't help you achieve that. Continue to the next page for some tips.



1. David Phillip's TEDx talk, "How to avoid death by Powerpoint" shares examples of detailed, wordy slides and their consequences: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lwpiLm6dFo>

Creating Visuals

Slide Tips



When creating slides²

- Your slides should support what you say, not be the center of attention. Ask yourself, **is each slide necessary?**
- Keep slides as **simple** as possible
- Have **one idea** per slide
- Don't be afraid of **blank slides or spaces**
- Use as **few words** as possible on each slide
- Be **consistent** in style, color, and language
- Use simple, **resonating graphics**
- Use **large enough font** to be legible
- **Avoid fancy transitions** or sound effects
- Use sufficient **color contrast** to help those with visual impairments³
- Think about **accessibility**⁴
- End with a summary slide and one that shows your audience how to contact you or **further engage**

Don't design a talk for slides.
Design slides for a talk.

Resources to help you

- Find open source photos and graphics through one of these sites:
 - **Wikimedia Commons:** <https://commons.wikimedia.org>
 - **Creative Commons:** <https://creativecommons.org/>
 - **Unsplash:** <https://unsplash.com/>
 - **Illustrations:** <https://illustrations.co/>
 - **The Noun Project:** <https://thenounproject.com/>

2. For more slide tips, visit TED: <https://blog.ted.com/10-tips-for-better-slide-decks/>

3. Here is a color contrast checker to make sure your colors have enough contrast: <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>

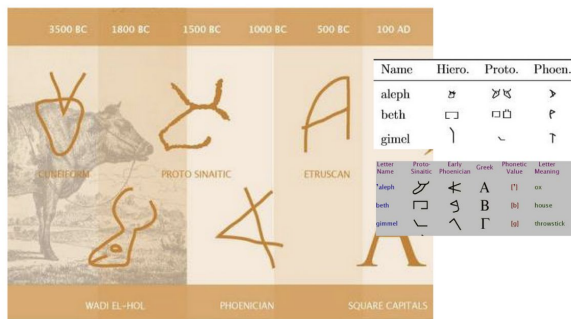
4. For more tips on making your slides accessible, visit WC3 Web Accessibility Initiative: <https://www.w3.org/WAI/teach-advocate/accessible-presentations/>

Creating Visuals

Examples of Slides

Here are examples of what to do and what not to do⁵:

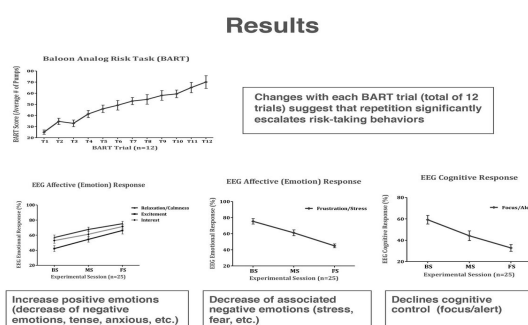
✗ Too crowded, hard to understand



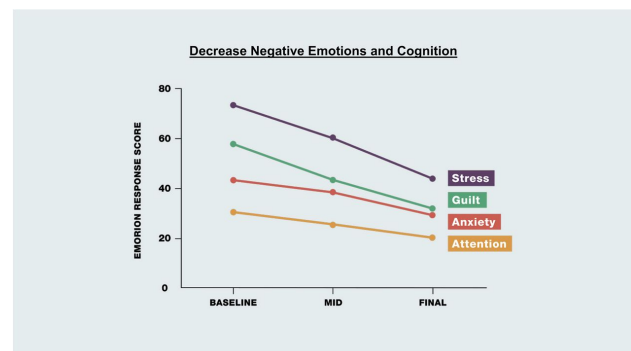
✓ Simple, bold, easy to understand



✗ Overwhelming, what's the focus?



✓ Clear takeaway



Examples of great slides from past Wikimania:

- **Lydia Pintscher's 2018 talk, "Wikidata: building bridges every single day":**

https://wikimania2018.wikimedia.org/wiki/Program/Wikidata:_building_bridges_every_single_day

- **Maarten Dammer's 2017 talk, "Sum of all paintings" (slides with and without notes):**

https://wikimania2017.wikimedia.org/wiki/Submissions/The_Sum_of_all_paintings_is_just_the_start

⁵ These slides are taken from TED's article titled "6 dos and don'ts for next-level slides, from a TED presentation expert": <https://ideas.ted.com/6-dos-and-donts-for-next-level-slides-from-a-ted-presentation-expert/>

Creating Visuals

Your Turn



An exercise

Can you think of the worst or best slide (or another type of visual) you have ever seen from a presentation in the past? Why was it the best or the worst?

Write an explanation in at least 3 sentences or bullet points as to why it is the best or worst, or both!

Step 4

Delivering Your Talk

Delivering Your Talk

Delivery

Verbal & Nonverbal

Once you have your outline ready, your next step is to practice its delivery. While the outline (including the structure and content) is the “what,” your delivery is your “how.”

How we speak has a great impact on the message that is received. Think of the last time you heard a monotonous talk. Even if the content might have been interesting, if delivered poorly, people may have not paid attention or received the wrong message.



How can you deliver a talk that your audience will want to listen to?

In general, a well-delivered talk is conversational, dynamic, and fitting in style to your topic.

Verbal Delivery

Here is a list of factors to consider in order to enhance your verbal delivery¹:

- Speed**
 - Slow down and be mindful of talking too fast, especially if you are a native English speaker
 - Vary your speed to help your talk sound conversational and dynamic
- Pause**
 - Welcome pauses. They can be a great way to provide emphasis, convey certain emotions, or give you time to think²
 - Replace filler words like “um” or “like” with pauses
 - Avoid rambling

1. An English acronym to help remember the components of verbal delivery is SPEV, which stands for Speech, Pause, Emotion, Volume

2. Andrew Dlugan writes a blog post sharing the benefits and techniques of using pauses in your talk: <http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/pause-speech/>

Delivering Your Talk

Delivery

Verbal & Nonverbal

...continued

- Emotion**
- Use a warm, conversational and non-monotonous tone
 - Exhibit emotions that are relevant to you and your talk. Do you want to express wonder, surprise, anger, excitement?
 - Don't force emotions. People can sense inauthenticity
 - If you are comfortable doing so, express vulnerability

- Volume**
- Use a volume that is loud enough so that people can hear you but one that is not overwhelming
 - Don't whisper and don't yell

Nonverbal Delivery

Here is a list of factors to consider in order to enhance your nonverbal delivery³:

- Gesture**
- Use hand gestures that are appropriate to your content
 - Use hand gestures to help animate your talk

- Eye Contact**
- Use a gentle gaze
 - Look directly on your screen or into the camera
 - If possible, try to read your audience's faces: are they attentive? Bored? Frowning in disagreement?"

- Expression**
- Have a relaxed, cheerful and attentive facial expression
 - Use facial expressions that align with your emotions, for example showing sadness on your face when you are expressing sadness emotionally

- Posture**
- Have a relaxed posture
 - Open up instead of close off your body

3. An English acronym to help remember the components of non-verbal delivery is GEEP, which stands for Gesture, Eye Contact, Expression, Posture

Delivering Your Talk

Virtual Delivery



What should you consider when delivering a virtual talk?

Verbal Delivery

- **To read a script or to not read a script?** When delivering a talk virtually, it is easier (and tempting) to read from a script. Unless you can read a script in a conversational manner, this mode of delivery can be monotonous and boring. Instead, use an outline that contains bullet points or sentences. Make sure you give yourself enough time to practice so you feel comfortable!
- **Your voice.** With virtual delivery, your voice plays a key role in your presentation. Be sure to enunciate your words and use a more energetic voice than you would in person. Use the verbal delivery practices on the previous pages to help you here.

Nonverbal Delivery

- **Facial expressions.** Use facial expressions that match your words to help bring life and emotion to what you say
- **Background.** Make sure you are in a quiet space with good lighting. It's perfectly fine to show people personal items in your background as it helps you appear relatable and human. You can also blur your background if you prefer
- **Your laptop/computer position.** Don't be too small or close up, but have your profile in the frame. Have your laptop elevated so that you are not looking down into it
- **Visual support.** Make sure you are well coordinated with any visual support you use. Do a test run before so you know how to present and control your visuals

Tech

- **Internet and other tech.** Check your internet connection. Do a run through with the virtual platform you will be using to deliver your talk

Delivering Your Talk

Considering Language

Whether you are a native or non-native English speaker, you will need to take into consideration that your audience members have various language backgrounds and may have difficulty understanding you. Here are some tips to keep in mind as you prepare for your talk:

- Avoid **idioms, metaphors, or slang** such as the English expression “let’s touch base”
- Avoid **abbreviations** such as the English abbreviation “ETA” (estimated time of arrival)
- Avoid **cultural references**, celebrities, brand names, or quotes to movies. If you need to use cultural references, explain them
- Be careful with **jokes**. A joke in your culture may not be funny in another context
- Use **simpler language** but don’t be patronizing
- Speak **slower**, add pauses. Again, don’t be patronizing
- Expect and accept that people will make **mistakes**. Don’t make people feel embarrassed about their language
- Be **receptive and adaptive** to others’ use of English
- Make the effort to **ask for clarification**
- Find **synonyms** for words that are difficult to pronounce or uncommon



- Talk at face value without **sarcasm or implied meaning**. For instance, if you use the phrase “Oh interesting...” to mean that you think something is strange, someone who is not native to English might not understand the implied meaning
- Use **meaningful expressions**⁴ to help guide your audience such as, “Today I want to talk about...” or “Next I will summarize...”
- **Enunciate**. Enunciating “t” and “r” is shown to help non-native English speakers understand native speakers⁵
- **Practice!** During practice, pay attention to speed and pronunciation. Practice with both native and non-native English speakers and get their feedback
- **Embrace your accent!** Everyone has one, even those who think they are “native”

4. For more examples of meaningful expressions, visit Rebecca Ezekial's article “Presentation Language for Non-native Speakers”:

<https://www.presentationprep.com/presentation-language-for-non-native-speakers/>

5. This comes from Dr. Jennifer Jenkins's 2002 study titled “A sociolinguistically based, empirically researched pronunciation syllabus for English as an international language”:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/249238138_A_Sociolinguistically_Based_Empirically_Research_Pronunciation_Syllabus_for_English_as_an_International_Language

Delivering Your Talk

Feeling Nervous

Is it really a surprise that public speaking is tremendously feared, almost as much as death⁶?

Why does public speaking cause so much fear? For many, public speaking triggers instinctual fears: fear of the unknown, fear of failing, or fear of people thinking badly of you. Public speaking anxiety has also been found to be associated with giving too much (negative) attention to ourselves⁷.

The reality is, no matter what external reassurance you receive, you will likely still feel fear. One piece of advice is: let fear motivate you and remind you that you are growing, risking, and learning. Dance with fear⁸. Let it guide your way.

While the fear might not completely disappear, there are ways to lessen it:

Tips

- Practice is the most effective step to reducing fear
- Visualize your talk's delivery from beginning to end
- Have a beverage in hand as nerves can cause thirst
- Take deep breaths before the session
- Channel the adrenaline into positive energy
- Remember that everyone in your audience wants you to succeed!
- Remember that this is a conversation from your heart about something you are passionate about. It's not a performance⁹
- Remember that the stakes are not high. You are not running for your life after all
- Name your fears. What are you afraid of. Is it rejection? Humiliation?
- Remember that if you make a mistake, all will be well. Your audience may likely not even notice

6. This comes from Dr. Karen Dwyer and Marlina Davidson's 2012 study titled "Is public speaking really more feared than death?": https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271993200_Is_Public_Speaking_Really_More_Feared_Than_Death

7. This comes from Dr. John Daly et al.'s 1989 study titled "Self-focused attention and public speaking anxiety": <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/0191886989900251>

8. The idea of "dancing with fear" comes from Seth Godin on an episode of the Steal the Show podcast: <https://stealtheshow.com/podcast/seth-godin-public-speaking/>

9. Richard Greene explains this in his TEDx talk titled "The 7 secrets of the greatest speakers in history": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i0a6lwFaF8A>

Delivering Your Talk

Your Turn



An exercise

Review the concepts of verbal and nonverbal delivery from the previous pages. Then ask yourself: what would the *opposite* of the verbal and nonverbal recommendations be?

Using the diagrams on this page, list at least one possible opposite for each of the verbal and nonverbal delivery recommendations. For example, the opposite of “speed” (in verbal delivery) might be: talking too fast, talking too slow, or using a monotonous tone. There are many possible opposites.

Bonus! As you list opposites, also reflect on the consequences of doing the opposite. To use the example of “speed” again, talking too fast may lead your audience to have difficulty understanding you.

Verbal Delivery	What is the opposite?	Nonverbal Delivery	What is the opposite?
Speed		Gesture	
Pause		Eye Contact	
Emotion		Expression	
Volume		Posture	

Step 5

**Practicing
and More
Practicing**

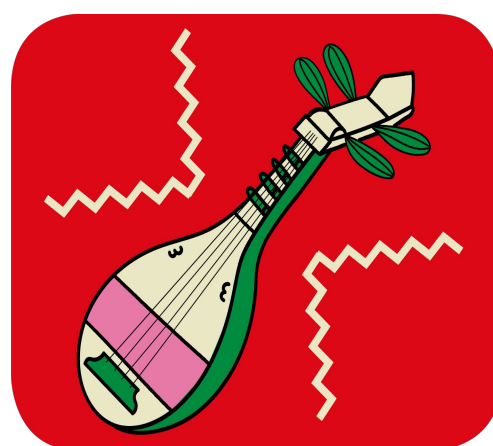
Practicing and More Practicing

Practicing Early and Often

One misconception about practice is that practice should come after your talk has been written and memorized. But this is incorrect! Start as soon as you have an outline, even before you feel prepared.

Practice is the key to feeling prepared

The more you practice, the less you will rely on the outline. Practice will help you gain confidence and feel less nervous. It will help you refine and improve your talk. It will help you sound natural and deliver a talk on time. The list of benefits goes on!



Another misconception of practice is that practicing makes your talk sound too rehearsed. This isn't true! If you feel like your talk sounds too rehearsed, you haven't practiced enough¹.

Should you memorize your talk?

You might be asking yourself, should I memorize, read from a script, or something in between? As we discussed earlier on the “Virtual Delivery” page, when making this decision, ask yourself, “Which choice will allow me to sound conversational?”

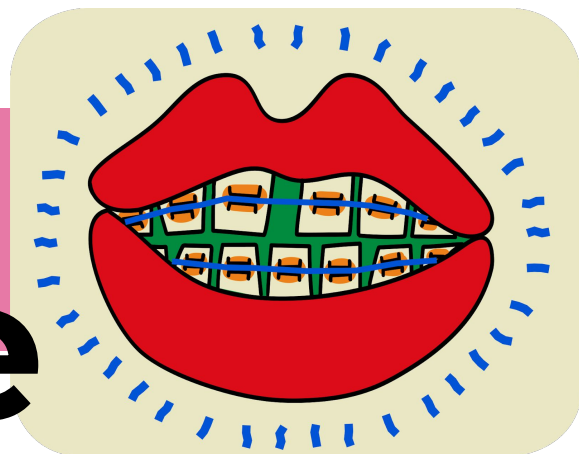
Reading a manuscript has the risk of sounding monotonous and boring, while memorizing has the risk of you forgetting your points. The most common approach is **extemporaneous speaking**², which is neither memorizing or reading a script but using brief notes to guide your talk. It requires practice and has the benefit of sounding conversational and authentic.

1. TED discusses this: <https://www.ted.com/participate/organize-a-local-tedx-event/tedx-organizer-guide/speakers-program/prepare-your-speaker/rehearsals>

2. Meggie Mapes explains this in her book *Speak Out, Call In: Public Speaking As Advocacy*, Chapter 11: <https://speakupcallin.pressbooks.com/chapter/rehearsing-your-presentation/>

Practicing and More Practicing

How to Practice



Now that we've discussed the many benefits of practice, here are some tips for how to practice:

- **Take notes.** Write down anything you notice, such as a point you want to change, a reminder to slow down, or a story that you feel great telling
- **Practice in the real setting.** This means that you practice in the exact same room, clothing and time of day. It also means you are using the same speaking notes, visuals and technology as you will be using during the real talk
- **Time yourself.** Time yourself counting up (starting from 0) in order to see how long you speak for and counting down (from 20 minutes down to 0, if your talk is 20 minutes) to see if your talk fits the allotted time
- **Record yourself.** Record yourself through audio and video and rewatch the recordings, looking for ways to improve
- **Experiment.** Practice with different tones, body language, speed. Experiment with the structure of your talk, how you tell each story, and how you begin and end
- **Practice with people.** Find friends, colleagues, or family to practice on and receive feedback from
- **Practice in different settings.** Practice in the shower. Practice while you go on a walk. Practice when you make breakfast
- Watch talks and **analyze other people's talks**³
- We said it already and we'll say it again. **Practice over and over.** Practice up until the day of your talk. The more you practice the better you will feel and the better your talk will be
- Practice your talk, yes, but also **practice being yourself**⁴! Be the person who is passionate about the topic you'll speak about. When the moment arrives to give your talk, you will be speaking authentically and have an easier time earning the trust and attention of your audience

3. John Zimmer from Manner of Speaking (<https://mannerofspeaking.org/speech-analyses/>) and Andrew Dlugan from Six Minutes (<http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/video-critiques/>) have done speech analyses. Read some of their work and try it yourself

4. This is inspired by Seth Godin who talks about this on an episode of the Steal the Show podcast: <https://stealtheshow.com/podcast/seth-godin-public-speaking/>

Practicing and More Practicing

Feedback

In order to improve from practice, it's important to give yourself feedback and to gather feedback from others.

As you practice, you will notice parts of your talk that seem difficult to say or parts that feel natural. Take note of those moments. Think about the ingredients of a good talk and how you are doing according to them (see the “Ingredients of Great Public Speaking” page for reminders). Don't be afraid to make changes - this is the most important part!

What is good feedback anyways?

Whether feedback is self-given or given by others, it should be **constructive**. Good feedback is constructive feedback. Constructive feedback is any feedback, positive or negative, that you can use to improve. It is:

- Actionable: you can do something to improve based on the feedback
- Specific: it is not vague or general but targeted and specific

How to give constructive feedback

- Be honest. Honest feedback is better than nice feedback
- Be quick. Give feedback immediately after, when the memory is fresh

Receiving feedback from others

Remember to be open to change. Use practice and feedback to improve yourself.

At the same time, remember that feedback, especially feedback that may seem negative, isn't a judgment of who you are as a person but a comment about your current, continually growing abilities⁵.

Examples of Feedback

Constructive feedback

- ✓ “I think you could have provided less details in the first story you told. The second part of the story did not add to your point”
- ✓ “You were talking too fast which made your ideas hard to follow. I would suggest slowing down, especially in the beginning”
- ✓ “I liked how you showed two sides of the issue. This gave us the audience the chance to have our own opinions”
- ✓ “The transition from your first point to your second point made your arguments sound cohesive. I think you could apply a similar strategy in the conclusion”

Non-constructive feedback

- ✗ “I really liked your talk”
- ✗ “I think you could have introduced your topic better”
- ✗ “I didn't understand your second story”

5. See psychologist Carol Dweck's concept of growth mindset: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mindset#Fixed_and_growth_mindset

Practicing and More Practicing

Feedback Questions

Here are some questions to ask yourself while you practice. If you have asked other people to be your practice audience, you can also give them these questions to answer.

General questions

- How can I improve?
- What stands out to you?
- What could I change to be better?
- Do I seem well prepared?
- How might the audience respond to this?
- Would this bore my audience?
- Would anything confuse my audience?
- What questions might people have?

Questions about content & structure

- What was the best element?
- What moments felt disconnected or confusing?
- Is the core message clear? Can my ideas be clarified even more?
- Was the conclusion effective?
- Were the points or stories relevant, interesting, and convincing?
- Were there any moments I was rambling?
- Are the transitions I make from point to point smooth?

Questions about visuals

- Do my visuals truly enhance my talk? Is everything necessary?
- If using slides, were my transitions smooth?
- If using slides, am I reading off my slides (which should be avoided)?

Questions about delivery

- Do I finish my talk on time?
- How was I with speed? Was I too fast or slow? Was I varying my speed?
- Was I using filler words like “um,” “so” and “like”?
- Did it sound conversational?
- Did it sound genuine?
- Does the tone match the content?
- Do I sound nervous?
- Am I too loud? Too soft?
- What type of gestures am I using? Are my gestures synchronized with my words?
- Is my body closed or open?
- What kind of facial expressions am I using?
- Where are my eyes looking?
- Am I positioned well in front of the screen?
- Does the camera look up my nose?
- Is there enough lighting in the room?
- Is my background distracting?

Practicing and More Practicing

Your Turn



An exercise

Record yourself practicing at least 3 minutes of your talk and replay it to yourself. As you watch the recording, write down any feedback you have using the questions from the previous page. Make sure you say more than, “It was bad” or, “It was good.” Elaborate on *why* it was good or bad, and how you think you can improve.

Write feedback to yourself in at least 3-4 sentences or bullet points.

Helpful Reminders

- You might be feeling uncomfortable doing this, but it really does help! Go for it, it's only for you to watch and you can delete it after
- Watching your recording will help you notice what you may or may not be doing well so that you can improve going forward
- Recording does not need to happen when you have memorized your talk. It can happen at any point in time. You can record the entire talk, or just a section

Step 6

Engaging Your Audience

Engaging Your Audience

Questions and Answers (Q&A)

Have you ever attended a talk where the speaker talked past their scheduled time leaving no time for Q&A? Our guess is that you have because it's a common occurrence¹. Leaving time for the Q&A and properly preparing for it not only gives you a moment to interact with the people who came to listen to you speak, but also shows them that you respect them and what they have to say.



Before the Q&A

- **Prepare for the Q&A in advance** by anticipating questions that the audience might have. Thinking of the questions your audience may ask can also help you decide the content to include in your talk
- **Practice your talk** so that you finish on time and leave enough time for the Q&A

During the Q&A

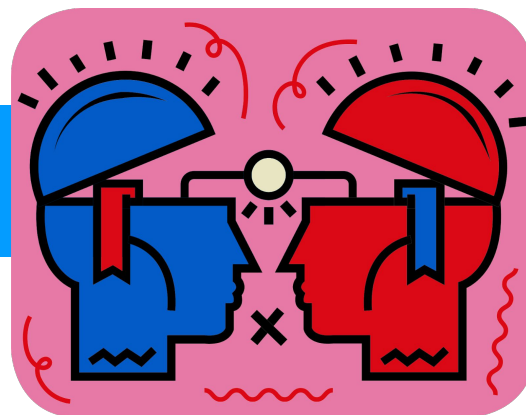
- **Repeat and read out audience members' questions** before you answer them. This helps other listeners understand what the question was and also gives you time to think of an answer
- Use the Q&A to **reinforce your main points**. Refer back to your points when appropriate
- Keep your answers **clear and brief**. Try not to sound like you are defending yourself and try not to ramble
- If you receive a question that you prefer not to answer, just say, "I prefer not to answer this question"

1. Andrew Dlugan discusses this in his blog post titled "Leading the Perfect Q&A": <http://sixminutes.dlugan.com/leading-the-perfect-qa/>

Engaging Your Audience

Q&A

...continued



- If you don't know the answer, first, **admit that you don't know**. Don't lie, don't pretend you know, don't ramble on and talk around the question. After admitting that, there are several next steps you can take:
 - Ask them to clarify the question. Maybe a rephrasing of the question will help you understand what is being asked
 - Ask your audience if they know the answer and encourage a dialogue after your session
 - Share what you do know that is similar or comparable
 - Take note of the person's contact information and say you will get back to them after you've done some research. And do follow up!
- **Don't let a single person dominate** the Q&A. Encourage people who don't often ask questions to do so
- When a question seems **off-topic**, say, "Thanks for the question. It is off-topic but I'm happy to talk about it after"
- If you are asked a question that requires some prior knowledge, **don't assume** everyone has the same background knowledge and make sure to **provide context** before answering
- **Anticipate questions**. Try to embed their answers into your talk where possible
- **Be respectful** of people's questions, even if they seem obvious or repetitive to you. Graciously answer the question
- **What if no one asks a question?** There are a few actions you might take:
 - End the session early. Thank your audience for coming and share with them how to contact you after
 - Collect questions from colleagues and friends prior to the session and answer those questions during the Q&A
 - Bring questions that you prepared prior to the session and answer those during the Q&A

Reflection

What questions do you think your audience might ask you?

Engaging Your Audience

More Tips



Here are a few more tips as you think about engaging your audience.

Make them feel welcome

- At the beginning of your talk, you can have a slide that says “Welcome, we’ll start in a few minutes.” Or invite them to get into a certain state of mind with a question, music, or a fun activity

Orient them

- Tell your audience how and when to engage. For instance, you can say, “Use the ‘raise hand’ function at the end” or, “Ask your questions in the chat during the session”
- Let them know what to expect from the session

Respect them

- Respect what they know and what they need
- Think about how to make your talk accessible for people with different backgrounds and abilities
- Think about your and your audience’s use of language. Refer to the “Considering Language” page for guidance
- Finish on time

Connect with them

- When possible, ask them questions
- Find ways to talk *with* them, not *at* them

Engaging Your Audience

Your Turn



An exercise

This exercise is a scenario-based one. Write down your response to this scenario.

Imagine you just gave your talk. You finished on time and you feel a sense of relief. You feel good about your delivery. You ask the audience if they have any questions and you start to see some questions coming in through the chat box. You read the first question and think to yourself, “Lucky me! This was a question I had thought I would be asked and know exactly how to answer it.” You answer that one easily and move to the next question. Uh oh. You are asked a question that challenges your points. The person says that they fundamentally disagree with what you are saying and wants to know how you will deal with the risks that come with your project.

How would you respond? If it is helpful to have more context to this scenario, you can base your answer on your own talk. Write your response to the audience member’s question in at least 2 sentences or bullet points.

Resources

Resources

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Further Reading

- Duarte Inc.
 - Resource Hub: <https://www.duarte.com/resources/#guides-and-tools>
 - TEDx talk titled "Nancy Duarte uncovers common structure of greatest communicators": <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=InYFpuc2Umk>
- TEDx
 - TEDx Speaker Guide: https://storage.ted.com/tedx/manuals/tedx_speaker_guide.pdf
 - TEDx Speaker Guide (Illustrated): <https://storage.ted.com/tedx/manuals/IllustratedTEDxSpeakerGuide.pdf>
- Mattan Griffel
 - Griffel's presentation titled "Building Great Presentations": <https://www.slideshare.net/mattangriffel/building-great-presentations-14607985/>

Resources

Facilitation Resources

Aspiration

- **Facilitation Wiki:**
https://facilitation.aspirationtech.org/index.php?title=Main_Page
- **Facilitation: Session Design Guidelines:**
https://facilitation.aspirationtech.org/index.php?title=Facilitation:Session_Design_Guidelines&oldid=182
- **Power Dynamics and Inclusion in Virtual Meetings:**
<https://aspirationtech.org/blog/virtualmeetingpowerdynam>

Community Tool Box

- **Developing Facilitation Skills:**
<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/group-facilitation/facilitation-skills/main>

Fabriders

- **Tips for Designing an Effective Workshop Session:**
<https://www.fabriders.net/session-design-tips/>
- **Virtual Session Support Materials:**
<https://www.fabriders.net/virtual-session-support-materials/>
- **Virtual Session Design Canvas V 1.0:**
<https://www.fabriders.net/canvas-v1/>

Hyper Island

- **Hyper Island Toolbox:** <https://toolbox.hyperisland.com/>

Leading Groups Online

- **Leading Groups Online: A Down-and-Dirty Guide:**
<http://www.leadinggroupsonline.org/>

Liberating Structures

- **Liberating Structures Menu:** <https://www.liberatingstructures.com/lis/>

MitOst

- **Learning Companion for Facilitators:**
<https://theodor-heuss-kolleg.de/publication/facilitation-step-by-step/>

Stanford University

- **Facilitating Group Discussion: Facilitator Guidelines:**
<https://web.stanford.edu/group/resed/resed/staffresources/RM/training/facilguide.html>

Trainings.350.org

- **Resources for Meeting Facilitators:**
<https://trainings.350.org/for/meeting-facilitators/>

Training for Change

- **Tools:** <https://www.trainingforchange.org/tools/>

