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A data presentation in six acts

Looking to present the results of your analysis? Follow these six steps:

1. Introduction. This is your time to "hook" the audience into your work and situtate the project into its wider context. Explain what makes the topic interesting and how you arrived at the questions you asked. Consider leading off with an interesting quote or anecdote related to the topic.

2. Hypotheses. You've set the stage for your analysis, where it's coming from and why it matters. It's great to have an opinion, but it's time to set those aside in favor of a set of falsifiable hypotheses.

3. Data. In this section, explain at a high level where your data came from and how you prepared it. This can be a tricky balance to strike: some audiences might want to nerd out over the wrangling, but many won't.

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Instead, discuss the philosophy behind what data is being used and why it's right to the hypotheses. This is also a great place to include some data visualizations to really give your audience a sense of the data's look and feel.

4. Methods. In this section you will cover, again at a high level, what methods you used to conduct the data analysis. If there are any assumptions that your test relies on, call them out here. The same spirit as #3 applies: this is more about explaining why you chose these methods, rather than a deep dive into how you conducted them or how they work.

5. Results. It's finally time to report what happened when you performed the designated methods on the aforementioned data. What does this mean for your hypotheses? Give the relevant diagnostics and statistics; what's relevant may be dependent on the technical prowess of your audience. The beauty of this framework is there's no fudging the results, as you were transparent about every component of the analysis.

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6. Discussion and recommendations. The ability to craft compelling recommendations from solid analysis is what distinguishes the *great* analyst from the good one. Give your audience that "a-ha" moment: knowing they know now, how should they act differently? What myths did you bust or riddles unlocked?

You might also consider what sorts of follow-up questions you'd like to answer, and what data you'd need to do it.

7. Bonus! Appendix. New data analysts are often shocked by how much of their work is *not* included in a presentation like this. *What about all the time I spent cleaning the data and trying different techniques?* This is all necessary work, but it's not the finished product. Think of the countless hours of film that get cut into one polished video: similar idea.

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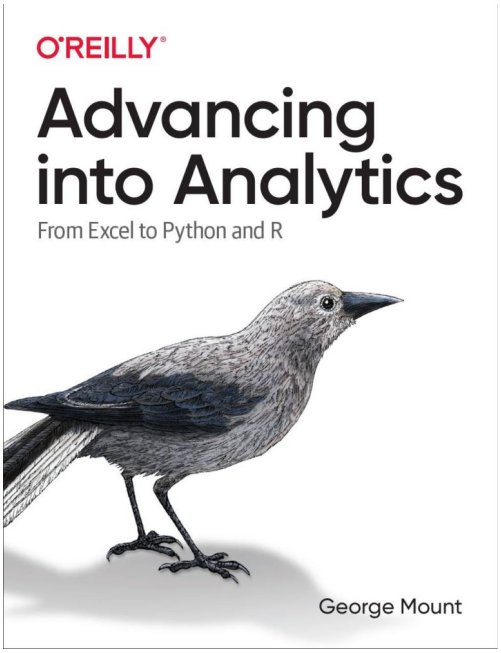
That's not to say all that "behind-the-scenes" work is wasted effort! On the contrary, it's a great idea to keep a record: both as an audit source a starting point for yourself and your team.

Ready to show your data presentation who's boss? A great place to start is with my book *Advancing into Analytics: From Excel to Python and R*. Learn more, including how to read for **free**, here.



Thanks for reading and I look forward to see what you do with data.