

## ORAL AND WRITTEN PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH

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## Introduction

- We are all writers and readers as well as communicators
- You will soon prepare written and oral presentations of your Master's thesis or doctoral dissertation
- Some facts are necessary for you to understand now:
  - Writing is hard, even for authors who do it all the time
  - Less frequent practitioners often get stuck
- A successful composition is:
  - based on a suitable design
  - clear, concise, and direct
  - revised and rewritten (many times)
- Writers and presenters can always improve and everyone need to practice hard and often



## Outline

- Introduction
- Composition design
- Written presentation
  - Elementary rules and principles
  - An approach to style
- Oral presentation
  - Rules and principles
- Concluding remarks
- Bibliography



## Composition design

- Templates provide the whole or parts of the design
  - Master's theses (BTH)
  - Papers and articles (IEEE, ACM, Springer, Inderscience)
  - Book chapters (Springer, IOS)
  - Reference styles (Harvard, Oxford)
- You need to consider the designated audience and adhere to the space or time constraints
- Complete the design before you start writing
- The more clearly you perceive the shape of what is to come, the better are your chances of success
- Novice writers should follow the design: skilled writers will in part deviate from it if necessary

## Written presentations

- When writing about research, consider:
  - What to include: *required* and *recommended* content
  - How to include it: depends on the *type* of conducted research, the *discipline*, and the *publication venue*
- The Oxford Style Manual serves as a comprehensive reference book on how to compose written content
- The Elements of Style is a simple guide on how to write
- Research reports typically consist of:
  - Text (chapters, sections, paragraphs),
  - Figures (for illustrating the problem, solution, data, or results),
  - Tables (for presenting data and results),
  - Lists, Equations, Algorithms, and so on (for specific works).

## Tables

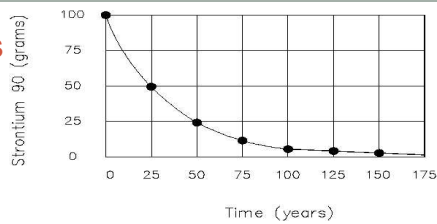
1. should be formatted according to the selected template
2. must include sufficient information for complete comprehension
3. consist of:
  - a. title,
  - b. identification number,
  - c. caption,
  - d. row/column headers,
  - e. values or placeholders.
4. must be carefully proofread
5. should be located close to the first textual reference or in the appendix

Table 2  
Mean Numbers of Correct Responses by Children With and Without Pretraining

Group	n <sup>a</sup>	Grade		
		3	4	5
Verbal Tests				
Girls				
With	18	280	297	301
Without	19	240	251	260
Boys				
With	19	281	290	306
Without	20	232	264	221
Mathematical Tests				
Girls				
With	20	201	214	221
Without	17	189	194	216 <sup>b</sup>
Boys				
With	19	210	236	239
Without	18	199	210	213

Note. Maximum score = 320.  
<sup>a</sup>Numbers of children out of 20 in each group who completed all tests.

## Figures



1. should be formatted according to the selected template
2. must include sufficient information for complete comprehension
3. consist of:
  - a. title,
  - b. identification number,
  - c. axis descriptions (with units),
4. adjacent figures on the same topic should use identical axis intervals
5. should be located close to the first textual reference or in the appendix
6. should be of high resolution and great quality

## Elementary rules of writing

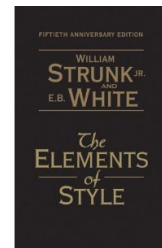
- Do not break sentences in two
- Use the proper case of pronoun
- The number of the subject determines the number of the verb
- Enclose parenthetical expressions between commas
- In a series of three or more terms with a single conjunction, use a comma after each term except the last
- A participial phrase at the beginning of a sentence must refer to the grammatical subject
- Form the possessive singular of nouns by adding 's

## Elementary principles

- Use the active voice (*some venues require the passive*)
- Put statements in positive form
- Make the paragraph the unit of composition
- Use definite, specific, concrete language
- Omit needless words
  - *Go through your manuscript and mark every word that is not required to communicate your message*
- In summaries, keep to one tense
- Place the emphatic words of a sentence at the end
- Keep related words together
- Avoid a succession of loose sentences

## An approach to style, part I

- Place yourself in the background
- Write in a way that comes naturally
- Work from a suitable design
- Write with nouns and verbs
- Revise and rewrite
- Do not overwrite
- Do not overstate
- Avoid the use of qualifiers
- Do not affect a breezy manner



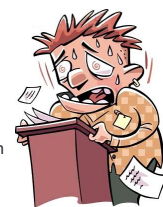
## An approach to style, part II

- Use orthodox spelling
- Do not explain too much
- Do not construct awkward adverbs
- Make sure the reader knows who is speaking
- Avoid fancy words
- Be clear
- Do not inject opinion
- Use figures of speech sparingly
- Do not take shortcuts on the cost of clarity



## Oral presentation

- A typical presentation of research
  - The problem to be studied
  - The contributions of the work
  - Relation to the literature
  - Definitions, descriptions of data, and so on
  - Main results
  - Conclusions
- The two key components are *organization* and *clarity*
- The *foundation* is more important than the *style*
- Native speakers need to prepare and practice a lot
  - It should be obvious that all others need to work much harder



## Rules and principles of talks, part I

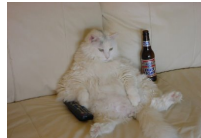
- A given time limit must never be reached
- Carefully select which parts to include
  - No reasonable time limit will be enough to communicate everything
- Structure the presentation to best support intuition
  - Do not structure it chronologically according to how you conducted the work from beginning to end
- Make the talk general enough for a diverse, intelligent, but possibly ignorant audience
  - Do not cater only to the experts in the room
- When asked a question:
  - Give a short and clear *correct* answer or explain that you do not know the answer

## Rules and principles of talks, part II

- Answer short questions during your talk if required
  - Save everything else to after the end of the talk
- Look your audience in the eyes (as you would in a regular discussion with your friends)
  - Do not look at your slides on the big screen or on your shoes or another presenter
- If the talk is held in English
  - The melody, rate, pronunciation, and volume should be adjusted accordingly regardless of the origin of the speaker
- Speak slowly, clearly, and introduce pauses
- Refer the audience to figures and tables using your voice
  - Do not turn around to point with lasers, sticks, or hands

## Concluding remarks

- It is a pleasure to sit in the audience during an excellent talk or to read an excellent piece of text
- Unfortunately, it takes time and effort to become skilled
- It is perhaps too much to ask that we all must be great communicators but we can all strive toward perfection
- The most common problem seems to be lack of practice
- There are no good reasons for being lazy after working hard to complete a project



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