

Tips for your final oral presentation:

- Practice makes perfect. Make sure you rehearse at least 3-4 times on the final version of the presentation. This is essential, and it easily shows itself on the quality of your presentation.
- Don't try to memorize your talk. Know the transitions between slides, and know the most important pieces of information that you should emphasize on each slide.
- Know your audience, their background, and never assume that they are experts on anything. Keep it simple, and try to give the most essential basics. The most advanced and detailed results can be kept in an appendix that you can show only if asked by the audience.
- Make sure that you know if there is an important person in the room, such as the leader in the field that you will present. 1- you should be aware of that person's work since his/her questions will probably come from that direction; 2- you should be able to complement his previous approaches that are tangential to what you present as compliment to that person and to his community such as his department.
- If possible know the room, equipment, and interface that you will be given for your talk
- Do NOT speak fast. Adjust your tone, and make sure the audience can follow you.
- Make an eye contact with everyone in your audience. Make them feel special.
- Do NOT bombard your audience with a lot of slides. If you have more than 35 slides for a 30 min talk (including title & thank you etc slides) you are at the edge of being boring and losing your audience. If you have more than 45 slides for a 30 min talk, you are a bad speaker. Anything beyond that I would question if your EQ exists at all. --- Surprisingly it happens in academia a lot.
- Keep your slides extremely simple, and avoid crowded slides, with a lot of figures OR a lot of text. Nobody can read the text AND listen to you at the same time.
- The most valuable parts of a slide are : 1- the title and 2- the figures/sketches/plots. Make sure your title gives a message with a conclusive statement. "Experimental results" is a useless title. Instead you can use "Experiments confirmed the importance of the plasmonic waves for resolution" as a title.
- Fonts! Fonts! Fonts! The bigger the better.
- Dress appropriately. In east coast settings a tie is "never" an overshoot. For west coast most often you don't need to wear a tie, unless it is a job talk.
- Always put slide numbers at the corner of the slide. Q&A period may need it.
- Simple – but sometimes forgotten: Always spell check at the end of your preparations.
- Q&A period: very very important. Never put something on your slide that you are NOT sure of. Someone can grill you on that one. Do NOT be shy to say "I don't know". It is ok that you don't know everything --- However, after a modest "I really don't know" you should be able to speculate as much as you can "cautiously" on some of the directions that could address that specific question that you did not know. Trying to look like you know it, even when you don't, will give the worst impression of all, and should definitely be avoided. This last item is especially important for job talks. At the same time, remember that it is not a good idea to say "I don't know" too often at the same talk. 1-2 times is ok, but no more. Try to speculate as much as possible after you have used your chances.

- If it is a job talk where time is very limited and you want to cover a lot of materials on your wonderful research ideas, warn the audience before hand to get the questions at the end. This will help you. If someone insists to ask a question during the talk, answer the 1st one. If there is a second one coming, answer it as well, but then remind the audience that you have a lot of material to cover and that you would prefer the questions to come at the end. This is the place where you can also point to the slide #s to kindly ask the audience to remember the slides that they have questions on.
- Negative questions --- Don't get angry regardless of how nasty or negative the question was. Defend yourself with least sign of emotions. Emotions will 1- make your answers less analytical and 2- may offend the entire audience. The audience can pick up your anger easily. If you want to have the audience on your side, keep calm and address the nasty comment/question with least anger and emotions.
- Do Not apologize or mention negative things about yourself or about a slide. Be always positive! Bringing out negative energies will make the audience also negative and biased towards your work. This is pretty common mistake. Before the audience notices, the presenter apologizes and points to some problems about him/herself or the presentation. No need to do that. Move on and keep your positive energy.