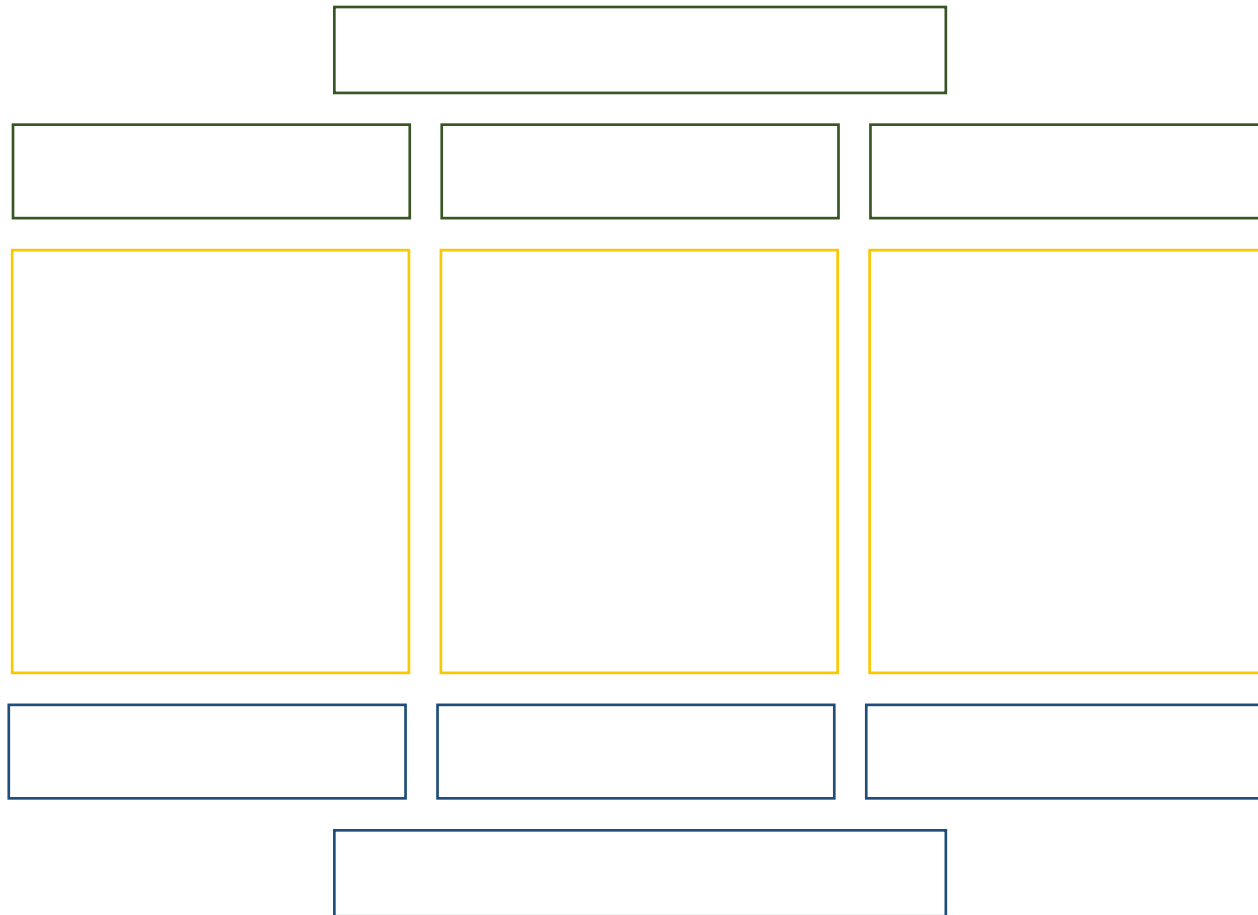




# Pitching Yourself

Structure from Beginning to End

# The importance of structure

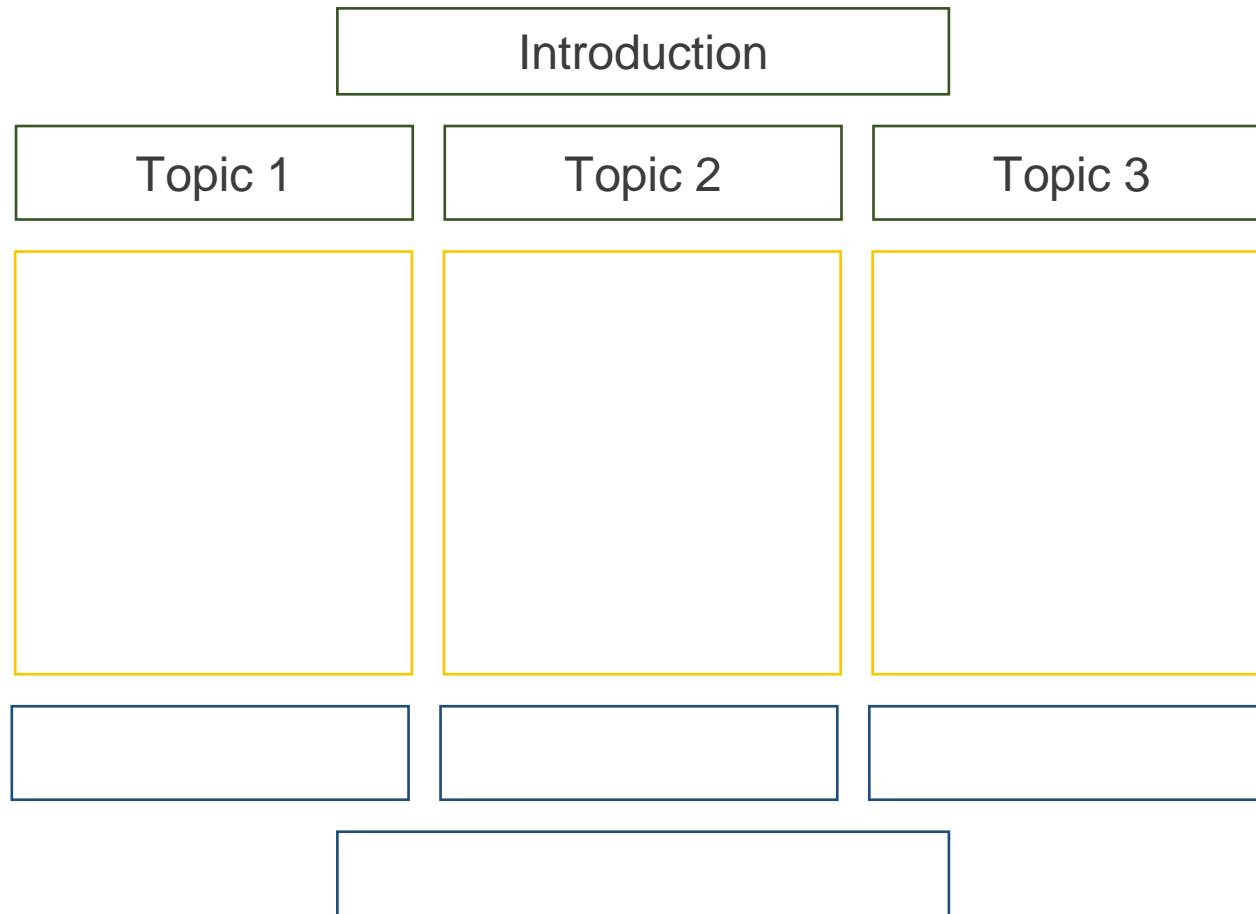


When developing a presentation it is essential to give structure to your ideas. Well-structured presentations are easier to build, easier to present and easier for your audiences to follow and remember.

The template on the left is designed to help you develop and place your content in the right areas.

In this presentation you will learn about each of the components, and then how to build your own presentation quickly and effectively.

# Structure template: beginning



Let's start at the top.

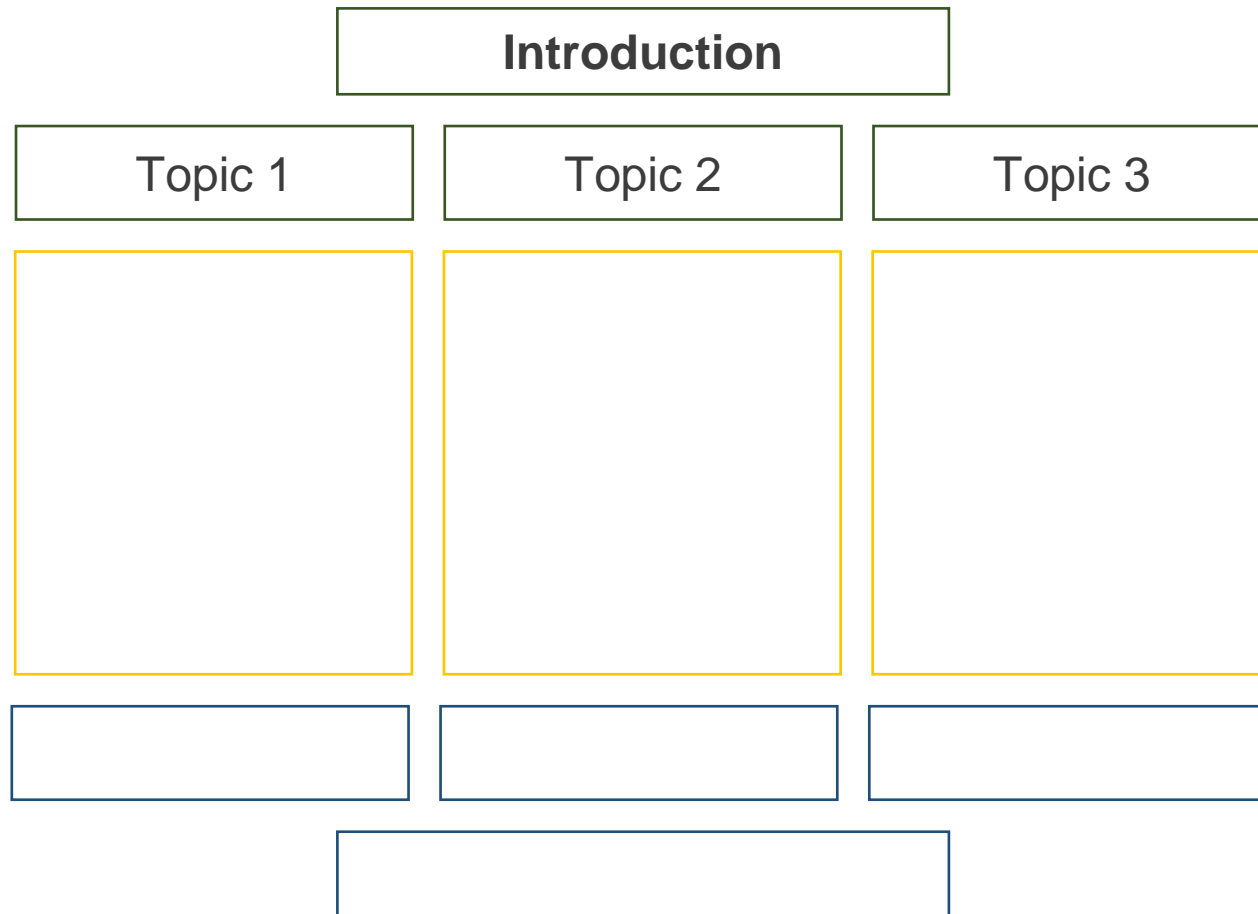
The beginning of your presentation is crucial to making sure you prepare your audience to listen and absorb what you are about to tell them.

The better you prime your audience before you get to the core of your presentation, the more aware they are of what to expect. It should answer any questions about how they should engage with your presentation.

At the top there are two key components:

- Introduction
- Topics

# Structure template: introduction



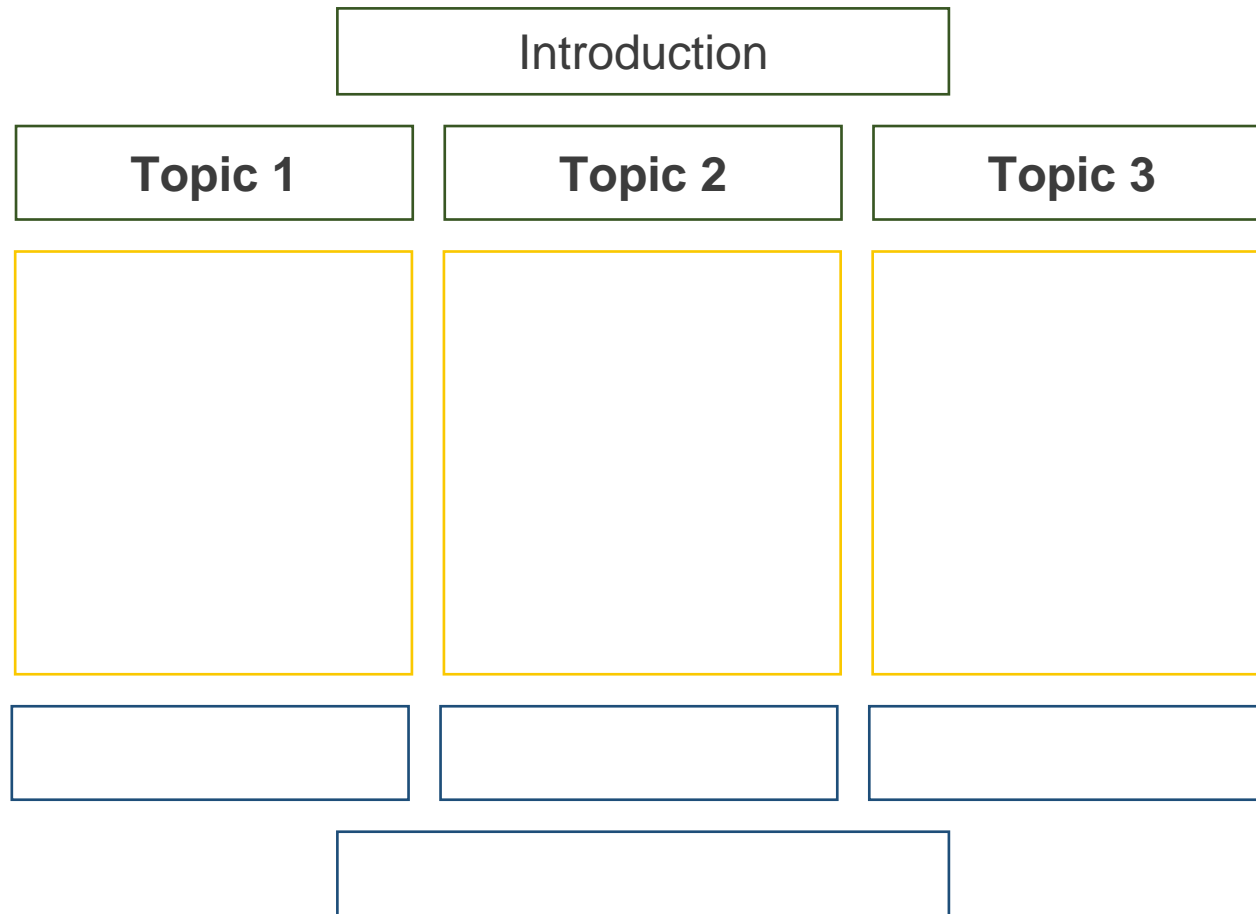
## Introduction

The length of your introduction needs relate to the length of your presentation. As a guide, if you present for five minutes your introduction should be no longer than 45 seconds.

Here is a list of potential things to cover in the introduction:

- any housekeeping
- your topic
- introducing yourself
- a creative device like an anecdote, a question or something visual
- information around your presentation format

# Structure template: topics



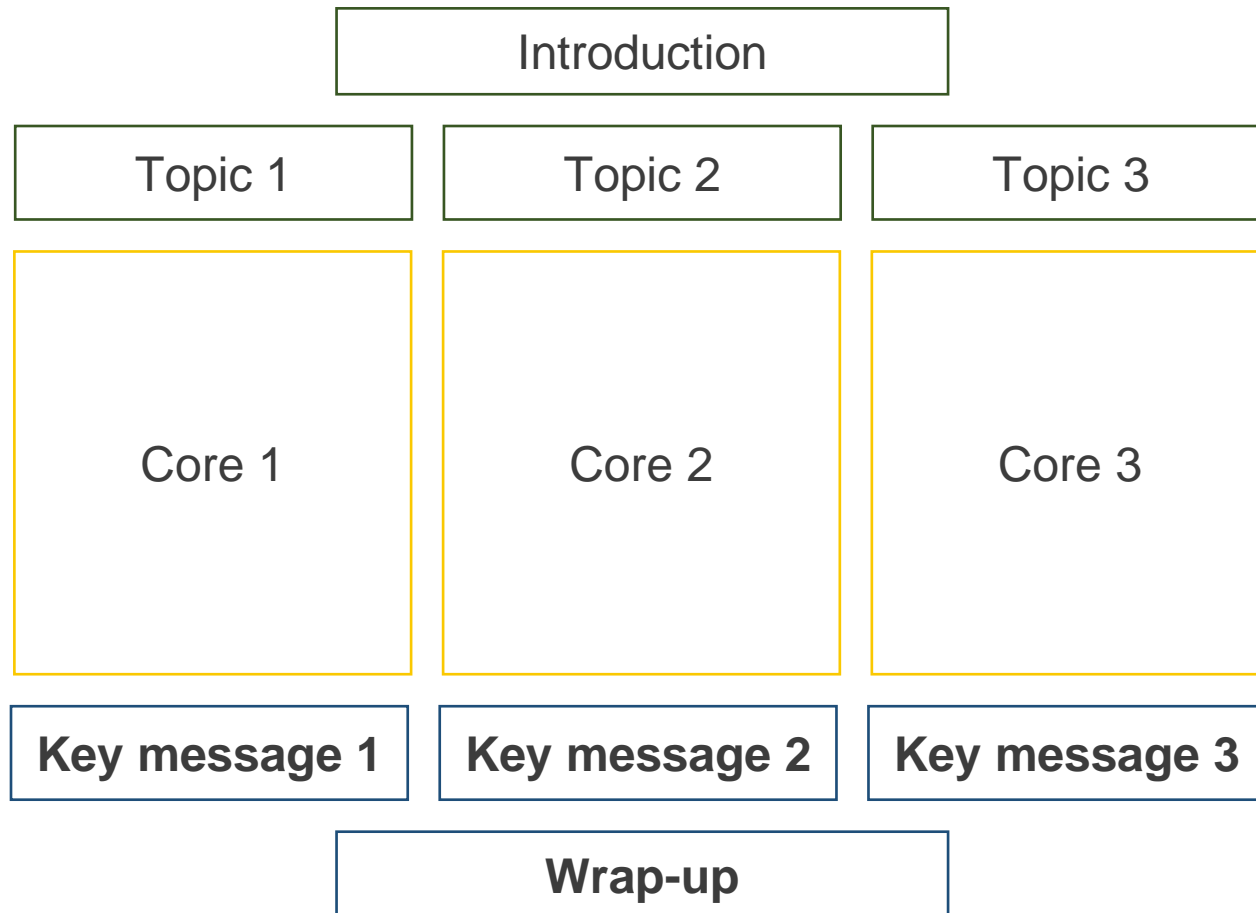
## Topics

Create themes/topics in your content to make it easier for your audiences to follow your storyline. They will usually be linked to each other but address different aspects of your presentation storyline.

There are many 'three-topic' presentation structures that you can use, such as:

- Problem | Solution | Implementation
- Current situation | Future goals | Action plans
- Goals | Options | Action
- The past | The present | The future
- The situation | The cause | The solution
- The market opportunity | Our solution | Becoming involved
- My qualifications | My interests | My ambitions

# Structure template: key messages/ wrap up



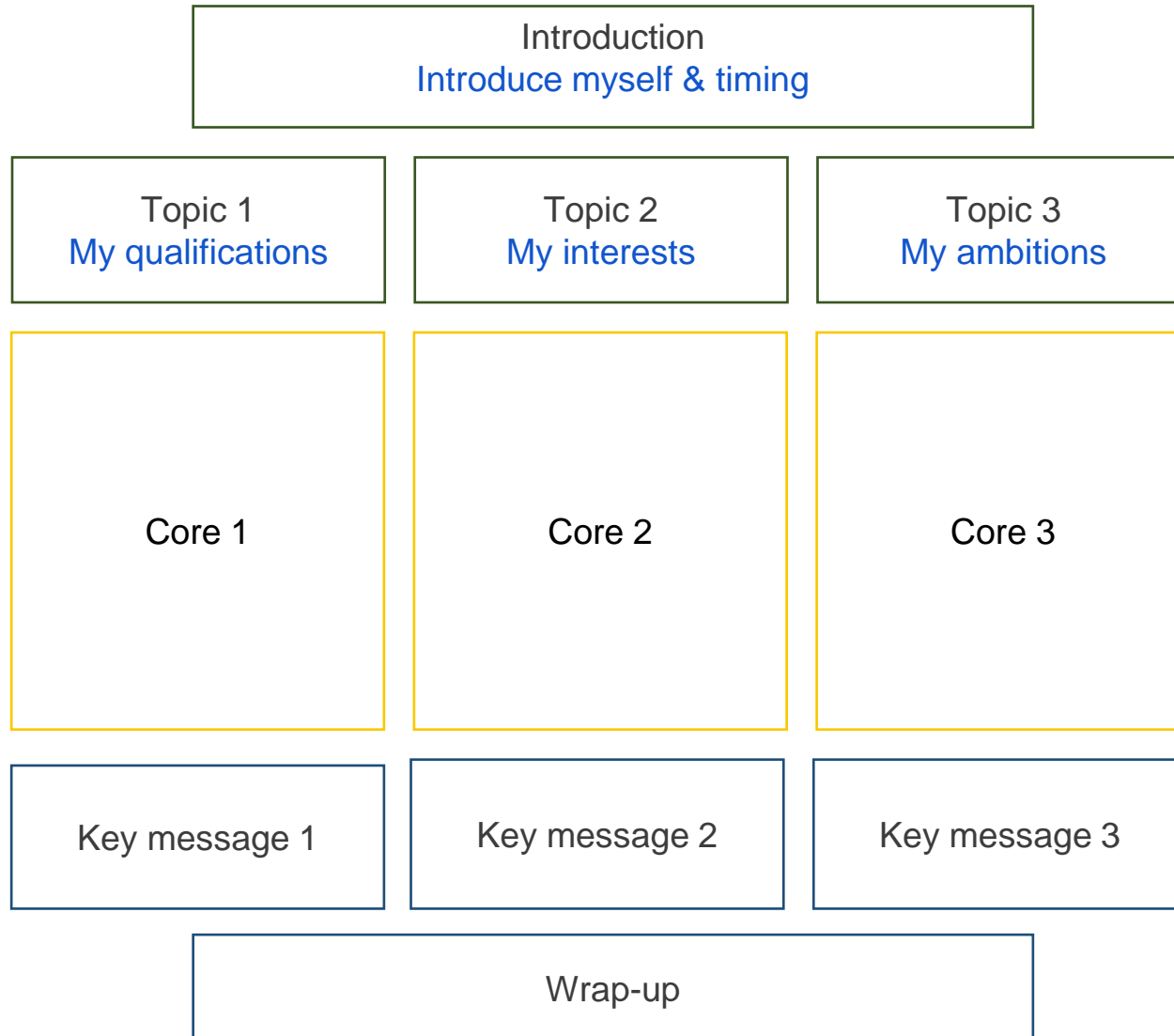
## Key messages and wrap up

You might sometimes be in presentations that feel like they stop abruptly – that's because the end hasn't been planned as the perfect end to a well-structured presentation.

As you can see the end has two parts and is a mirror image of the beginning:

- **Key messages:** a very succinct and memorable summary of the 'key message' from each topic.
- **Wrap-up:** clearly articulate the practical objective, or what you want your audience to do as a result of hearing your presentation. Then give them a call to action with clear next steps so they can act quickly and easily.

# Example: the beginning



## A sample presentation

Now that you have an understanding of each of the the component pieces, you will work through a sample presentation using the template.

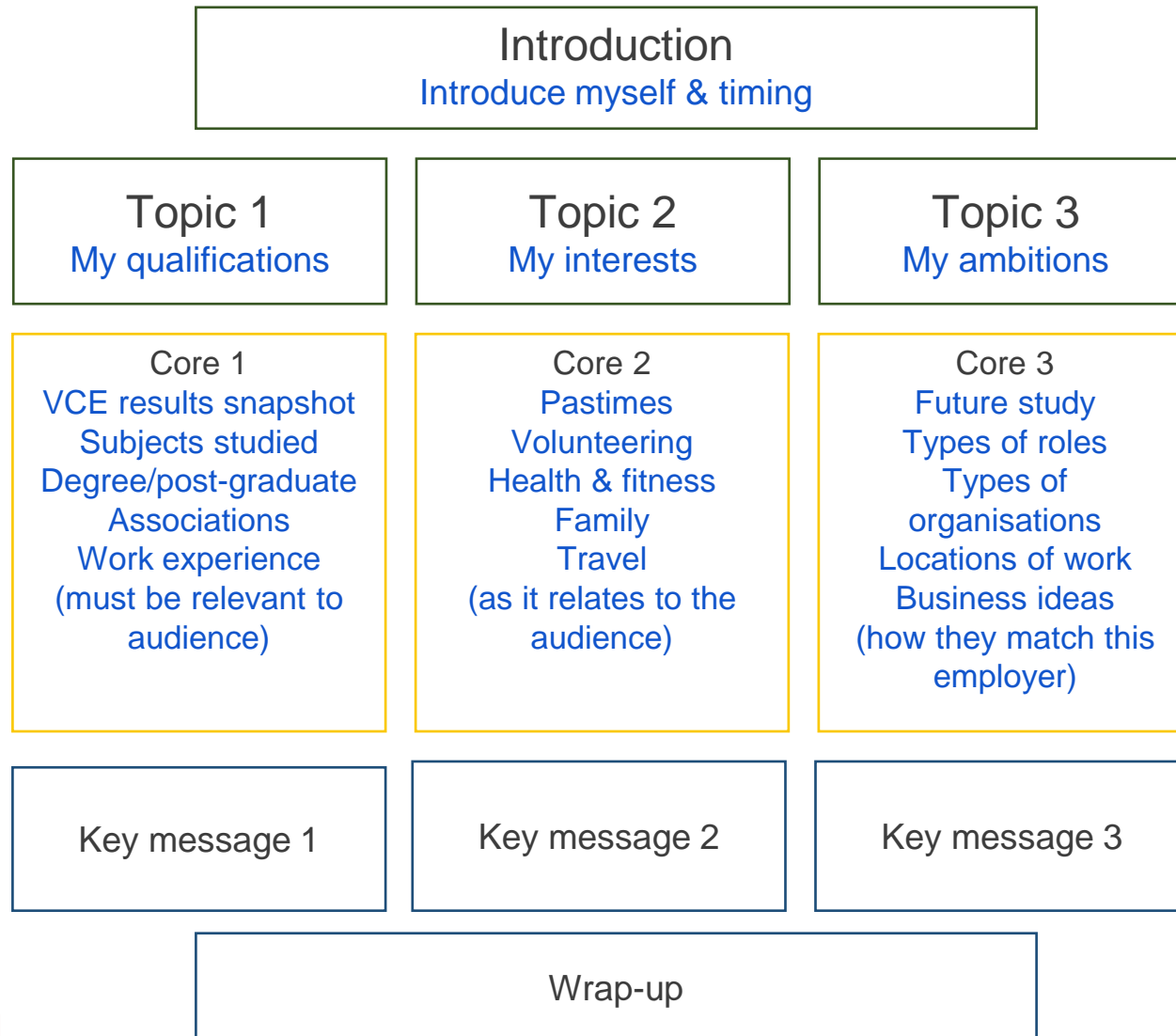
We have chosen a five-minute presentation to a prospective employer by a student from RMIT. Let's start at the beginning with the introduction and the topics.

**Introduction:** Introduce yourself briefly, and say how long your presentation will run for.

**Topics:** Tell your audience that you intend to cover three topics in your presentation today:

- your qualifications
- your interests
- your ambitions

# Example: the middle



Your audience should be primed now to engage in your presentation, being very clear about what they will be hearing and how they will be hearing about it. You can now get into your **core content** for each topic.

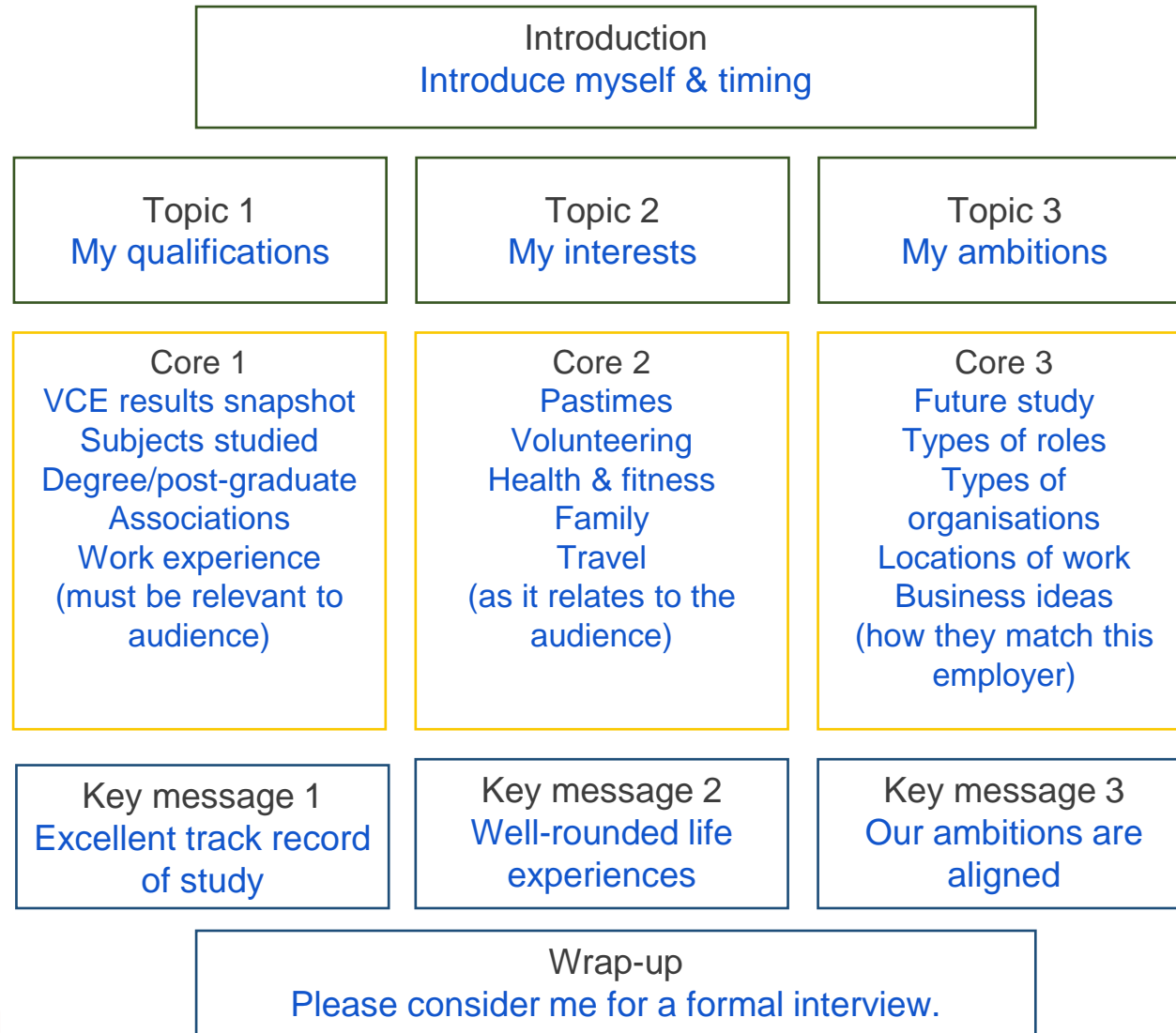
In planning the presentation, we estimated that each core would be about 1 minute. It doesn't have to be exact but you do need to be disciplined about keeping the three cores to roughly 60% of your presentation time.

You can see the sort of information I have included for each of the topics in the graphic on the left side of the screen.

Ideally all this content seamlessly knits together into a storyline that is informative and, above all else, is relevant to the future employer.



# Example: the end



Having heard all the key parts of your story in more detail, it's now time to conclude the presentation by restating your three topics with a **key message** for each.

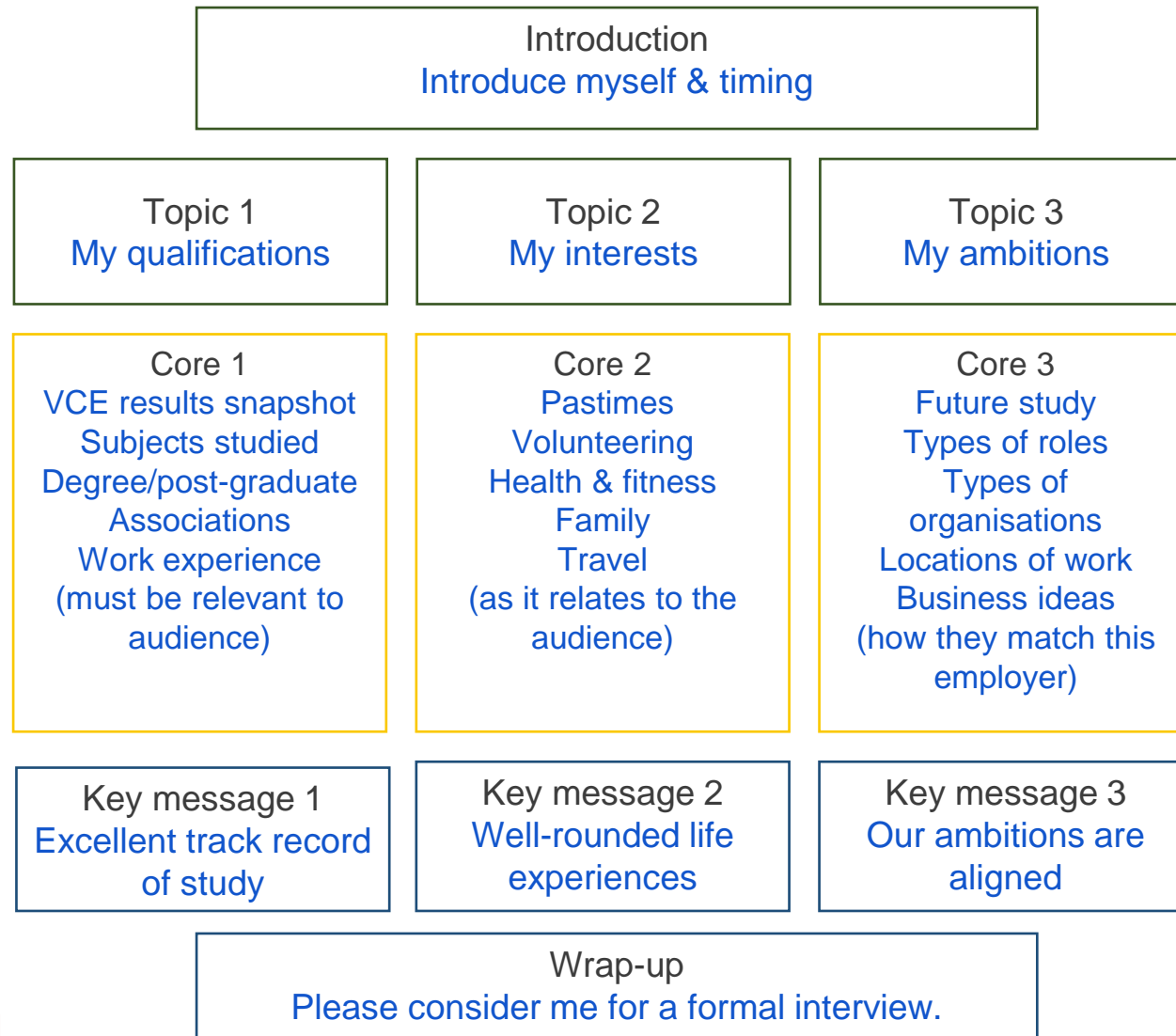
The key messages capture the essence of your pitch. Use carefully constructed sentences that reflect the facts and the benefits for each topic. Key messages work best when they are memorable.

Once those key messages have been delivered, bring them together in the **wrap-up**. State what you would like your audience to do – in this case it's to consider you for a 'formal interview'.

Of course it could be a range of others things like:

- learning more about the opportunities at that organisation
- being given a chance to meet other people
- being offered the role

# Example: the timings



Beginning  
20%  
1 minute

Middle  
60%  
3 minutes

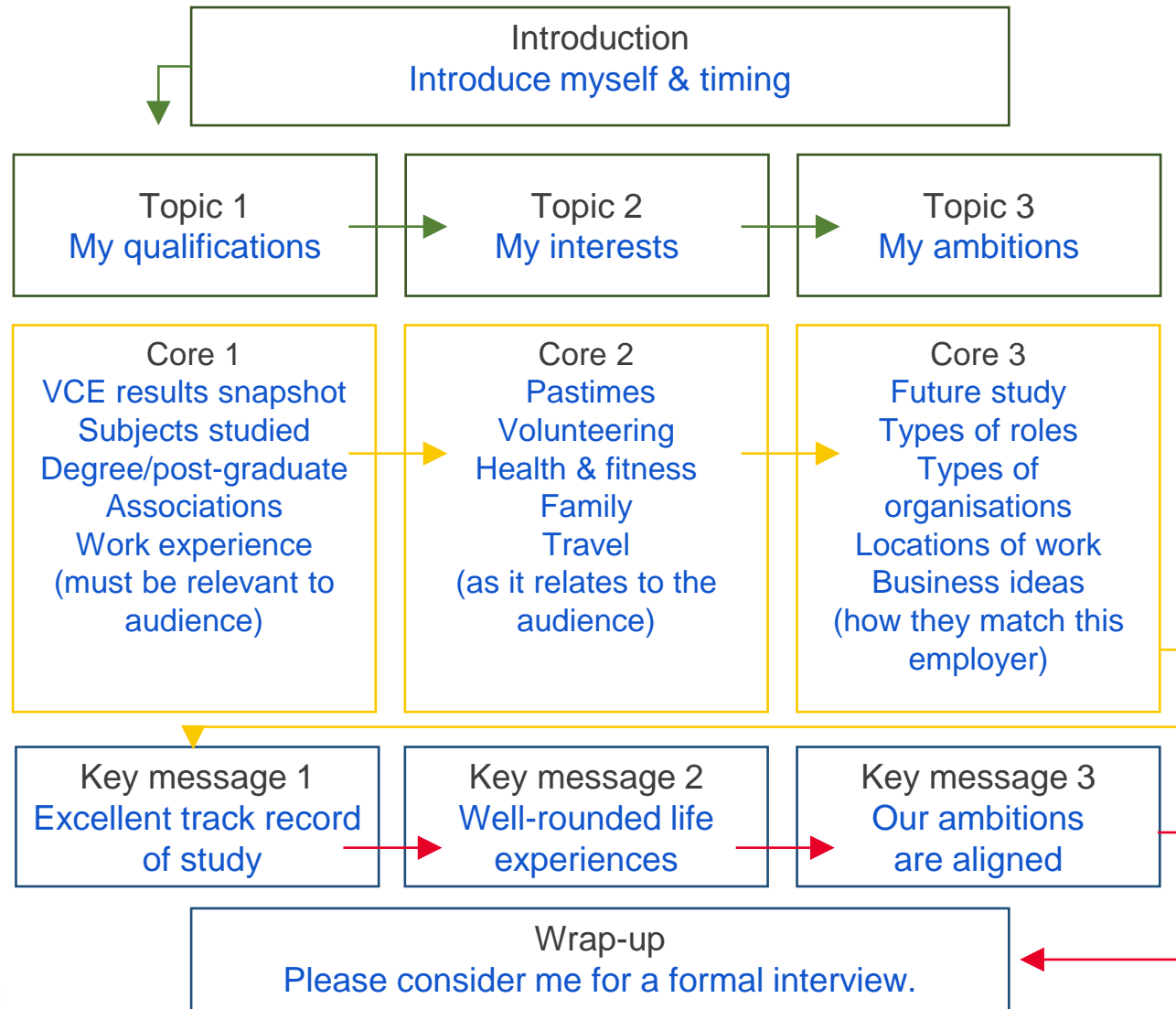
End  
20%  
1 minute

While this is just a guide, the best presentations often have a sense of symmetry and balance that audiences respond well to.

We have given you both the percentages and the actual amount of time for a five-minute presentation for each of the three segments.

It then makes sense that each of your topics will be given a roughly equal share of the time allocated to the middle, or about one minute for each topic.

# How the storyline flows



In the graphic at left you can see the arrows that flow from the beginning of the presentation to the end. This illustrates how the storyline flows through your presentation.

So it's logical that we complete the beginning before moving to the middle, and finish the middle before moving to the end.

The storyline flow helps your audience connect with and follow your ideas as you present them. The flow also helps you gain confidence about locating where you are at any stage in your presentation.

Once you have filled out all the areas of your template and the storyline flows from introduction to wrap-up, you are well on the way to a great presentation!