

# Hints for Successful Presentations

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✿ These first six steps are critical for developing a winning presentation:

◆ **Analyze your audience and determine your purpose.**

This is really pretty easy because you know your audience will be a panel of judges who are playing the part of the community members from the town of Carrot. Your purpose is to “sell” them on the course of action that your team has developed.

◆ **Research and collect your information.**

You have had from the beginning of the school year until now to collect information about the current issue. You can also look at the Utah Envirothon website ([www.utahenvirothon.org](http://www.utahenvirothon.org)) for resources pertaining to this topic. We’ve recently added some resources that are specific to this oral presentation topic - go to the *Students and Advisors* tab and choose the *Oral Presentation Problem* link.

◆ **Organize your ideas and information.**

You are given the oral presentation scenario one month in advance. There is an expectation that you will spend some time preparing. Please remember that the oral presentation score is doubly weighted and counts as 200 points towards your team’s overall score. You will have 12 minutes to present your plan with a short question and answer period immediately following. Rehearse your plan several times to get a feel for how long 12 minutes is so you will receive full credit from the judges.

◆ **Add “finishing touches” to the content and structure.**

Every winning presentation has a structure, one that flows smoothly from a dynamic opening to powerful and compelling conclusion.

◆ **Prepare supporting visuals.**

Visuals can help you explain your plan. If you take the time to make and bring one, be sure to refer to it and ensure that the information is large enough to be read by the panel of judges. Please refer to the Oral Presentation Rules for information on what teams are permitted to use.

◆ **Practice, practice, practice.**

☀ Use the following dynamics to present your plan. (There are 40 points awarded for the overall presentation quality - don't lose points here.)

◆ **Ease, voice inflection and fluency**

Be as comfortable as possible. The ease you feel will be translated to the judges. Be familiar enough with the material that you won't have to read directly from your note cards. Avoid a monotone delivery. Show your enthusiasm and belief in your plan - the judges will appreciate that since they will be hearing several proposals throughout the evening.

◆ **Enthusiasm, gestures, eye contact and posture**

Energy = Intensity. Believe in your proposal - yours is the best...show it! Be positive and be vibrant. Be aware of where your eyes take you...don't let them wander. When you are speaking, your eyes should be on the panel at all times. When you are not speaking, stand with your feet flat on the floor - don't rock back and forth. Keep your arms at your side or hands in front of your body. Keep your hands out of your pockets. Be attentive to the speaker and be ready to help if they stumble.

◆ **Sincerity, credibility and concern**

Demonstrate an understanding of the problem you have been given. Relate the underlying causes of the problem and how your solution addresses it. Also be prepared to answer any questions relative to problems your proposal may create. Treat it as a real problem and try to develop a workable, real solution.

◆ **Authority**

Authority communicates the message "I know the answer". It is of paramount importance for all of you to use proper English. Steer clear of slang words or words with double meanings. Feel free to use contractions when speaking but to make a special point, use the long form such as "We cannot fail to act immediately".

**Quote authority** - The teams that do the best are professional, smooth and accurate. They quote authorities on the subject.

◆ **Creativity**

Demonstrate your creativity through inventive use of props, elaboration on the scenario or use of analogies. Allow your personality and sense of humor to show through. The judges realize you are high school students and want you to feel comfortable being yourselves.

◆ **Visual aids**

Make sure you follow the Oral Presentation Rules and use only permitted materials to create them. Even more importantly...if you bring visual aids, make sure you refer to them and that they are legible for the panel to see from a distance.

- Organize your presentation. Remember...there are 3 parts to every presentation:



### ◆ Introduction

Prepare an opening - don't just drift into the subject. Grab their attention....don't just hope for it. Stay away from the usual *"Good afternoon...It's such a pleasure... We're delighted..."* They are old fashioned and are generally considered meaningless.

You may want to introduce the team by saying *"Ladies and gentlemen I'd like to introduce our planning team. On my left is..."* or just introduce yourself and then as each member has a part let them introduce themselves.

After introductions, slip into that well prepared beginning. Open with something unexpected or unpredictable - an attention getter. Some ideas to try:

- A Question
- A Challenge
- A Quotation
- An Observation
- Just one word
- Ask a rhetorical question
- Go directly to one of your visuals

### ◆ Body of the Presentation

This is the part where you sell the panel your idea. Move from point to point with each team member contributing equally if possible. You may use one person as a moderator (this can be very effective) or you may want to quickly present the plan and then have the team take it apart and put it back together again. Transition quickly and smoothly from the opening to the body of the presentation. Since it's the major portion of your team's effort you want plenty of time to go over it with the panel.

The most common transitional device is to enumerate. *"The first reason to accept our proposal is...The second reason is..."* This is good but often used. Consider using a theme or metaphor as a transition. *"There is a myth that protecting the environment is bad for the economy. Quite the contrary...There is another myth that trees cost money and provide little in return...And the last myth that we are going to expose is..."* This creates a positive image the judges will remember.

The presentations that do the best seem to have a few things in common. They are **energetic**, they are **professional**, they use **quotations** from real sources and use them appropriately. They demonstrate a vision for the future beyond this problem and an understanding of the interrelationships of different factors. They understand that this problem is just one part of a larger problem and any solution may have effects beyond your scope of study.

### ◆ **Conclusion**

The purpose of your presentation is to challenge the panel to select your plan above all others. Close by calling for a specific next step. For example *“When you give the go ahead we will inform our vendors to put into motion the timeline and steps we have outlined.”*

### ◆ **Question and Answer Period**

After your presentation, the panel will have the opportunity to ask questions of the team in order to gauge your understanding of the facts, your understanding of the problem and clarification of points you made during your presentation.

Use this time to further explain your plan - this is extra time that you should use to your advantage. Treat each question as an opportunity to elaborate on your plan. Preface your answer with things like: *“I thought someone would notice this point”* or *“Thank you...you’re a good listener”* or *“This is a great question...”*

Use SEER to help formulate your response.

- S = Summary (a one sentence statement)
- E = Elaboration (use key points to support your answer)
- E = Example (specific illustrations that clarify & make key points memorable)
- R = Restatement (restate or summarize)